EDUCATION, CULTURE AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

By the same author

PROBLEMS OF EDUCATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

EDUCATION, CULTURE
AND THE
SOCIAL ORDER

by

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To

the deeply loved and revered memory

of

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

whose life was an epic struggle in behalf of the values advocated in this book and whose thought has provided the inspiration for a good deal of what I have written about problems of Education, Culture and the Social Order

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

I OWE an explanation, if not an apology, for the rather pretentious title of this book. I began my study of educational problems many years ago in the twenties of this century when not only in this country but in many other countries also—including the United Kingdom from which, in the recent past, we have mostly borrowed our approach to, and outlook on, education—they were generally viewed in predominantly individualistic terms. Since then so much has happened in the world and in India that almost the entire pattern of life and its problems has been transformed. Perhaps in no other quarter century throughout human history have there been so many and such far-reaching changes. It is true that some of the characteristic features of the modern world took shape in the nineteenth century which witnessed the working out of the Industrial Revolution but its deeper implications and inner conflicts were not fully revealed till the present century. The 'chain reaction' which was then set in motion still continues and the Atom Bomb is only the most spectacular—but by no means unexpected—of its many consequences. Its repercussions have been violently felt in every single phase of our life—social, political, cultural, economic and technological. Only a veritable Rip Van Winkle could possibly be unaware of them or ignore them! It is, however, a curious fact of human psychology that we are often *aware* of many things—either at the level of being intellectually conscious of them or merely feeling them in our bones—but we fail to adjust our thoughts and feelings and our behaviour to the radically changed situation. There is some kind of fatal inertia which dogs human behaviour and which is resistant to the pressure of changes all around. It is this time-lag between the demands of a new situation and our traditional ways of thinking and living which creates the many difficult and tragic

anomalies and complications that beset modern civilization.

This failure of adjustment is particularly marked in the field of Education where such adjustment happens to be particularly necessary. That is so, because the very nature of its objectives and processes requires that it should be sensitive to the forces playing on life. Moreover, failure to work out proper adjustment in this field is also largely responsible for failure in other fields. After all, the essential business of Education is to make the children and adolescents vitally aware of, and responsive to, the world in which they are living today and the world in which they will have to live tomorrow. Whether the object of the educator is to "adjust the child to his environment"—which is rather a static view of the process—or to develop his Individuality which may interact fruitfully and dynamically with that environment, a clear understanding of, and responsiveness to, the contemporary scene is necessary. Again, this individuality does not grow in a vacuum; it must draw its strength and sustenance from its interaction with the forces operating in the world around. If education confines itself to the narrow groove of the traditional school subjects and activities and remains complacently indifferent to these wider issues, the students will grow up without being aware of them and they will not be able to adjust themselves properly to the new economic, social, political and technological developments. A dynamic approach in education is, therefore, called for not only in the interest of better schooling but because, without it, there can be no success in the other spheres of national reconstruction. It is for this reason that I regard the building up of a proper system of national education as a matter of highest priority, not only for the educationist but also for the administrator and the statesman. Every one of their far-reaching schemes is doomed to failure if the men who are to work them out—from the planners at the top to the workers at the bottom—have not been educated as efficient and mentally alert persons, possessed of initiative, resourcefulness and capacity for co-operative work. But practical efficiency and mental alertness are not enough. In the world of today, the social and moral qualities, which are

necessary to ensure the good life, are even more important than the intellectual and practical aptitudes. During the last hundred years or so, there has been an unprecedented—almost incredible—increase in our knowledge and technical efficiency and, though their full repercussions have only been felt in the western countries, we too are co-inheritors of this great legacy of Science and Technique which has made our world into One-World, even though its socio-political pattern and the behaviour of its politicians and statesmen may continue to deny that basic reality. So, with all these enormous resources at our disposal, it is *comparatively* easy to develop practical and intellectual efficiency. But it is much more difficult—as also more significant—to develop breadth of outlook, social and moral sensitiveness and the basic human quality of charity and tolerance without which life is apt to sink to the level of a brutish struggle for survival. From the ethical and moral, i.e. the characteristically *human* point of view, it is a matter for serious thought that while, thousands of years ago, this struggle was carried on through individual or small group fights, in which primitive bows and arrows or crude stone weapons were used, it has now assumed global proportions and uses planes flying at supersonic speeds and poison gases and atomic bombs which can not only wipe out whole cities and countries but also defile the very springs of life for generations. This makes the predicament of the modern man and his culture and civilization more precarious and more pitiable and it underlines the urgency and significance of the educators' task in emphatic terms. Against this background, education is seen to be—except by those who are or may pretend to be blind—*not* a side issue, *not* a decorative after-thought to the 'real' business of life, *not* a luxury which may be provided *if* possible, *not* a concession grudgingly extended to the 'lower classes' but a *basic* activity without which life cannot fulfil its gracious promise. I am not saying this just because everyone likes to "cry his own wares" and I happen to be connected with educational work. It is, to my mind, the clear and inescapable corollary of the socio-political and ethico-moral situation in which we find the world today.

It should give the educators not only a sense of the *immensity* and significance of their task but also of personal *humility* in facing it and a realization of the fact that they cannot deal with it by themselves but must secure the intelligent co-operation of all others interested in problems of social and human welfare. And their approach to it must be the *social* approach in the wider sense of the word—that is, seeing the problems of individual development in the context of the total social situation.

If this viewpoint is correct—and to my mind any other educational approach would be shallow and unreal—there is no alternative for students of education but to envisage their problems with reference to the ideals and values, the needs and the difficulties of their Social Order—not only as it is but as it might be. If they fail to do so they will not be able to make any impression on the course of events; they will be just caught up in the petty details of curricula, methods and school organization, all important in their own place but *uncreative* if envisaged as self-contained issues. It seems to me, therefore, that an attempt at an elucidation of some of the problems on the frontier common to Education, Culture and the Social Order is likely to be of some service to educationists. I would go further and say that some study and understanding of these inter-relationships is necessary not only for the 'educationists', which has a rather high-browed connotation, but also for the working teachers who have to deal with the actual teaching situations in the class room from day to day and to educate children into intelligent and co-operative citizens of our newly emerging democratic social order. They may not—and actually do not—have the time or the capacity for the first-hand study of philosophical and sociological issues. But surely they cannot achieve anything valuable unless they can see their work in its broader setting.

This has been rendered all the more urgent because we are today at one of the great crossroads of our history when the pattern both of our culture and our social order is being re-fashioned. While it is true that education should *always* be essentially a forward looking activity, in normal times when

changes take place rather slowly and decorously, its function is mainly conservative—adjusting the child to a relatively stable environment. But in periods of crises like the present, when the old order is dying out and the new one is not quite born, when the older forms of culture have lost their grip on the loyalty, at least, of the youth and the new 'shape of things' is far from being clear, education has a specially difficult and critical role to play. It calls for *intelligent*, co-operative effort on the part of all teachers, for a general awareness of the issues that are involved and for a clear appreciation of the part which they are expected to play. No uniform, centralized directive or 'Plan' of education, however well organized, can fit them for this dynamic role. That would be against the whole spirit of democracy which calls for freedom, initiative and creative participation on the part of individuals in the framing as well as the execution of policies. This obviously implies that, in the field of democratic education, the teachers themselves must become active and intelligent leaders and participants and work in association with other individuals and movements concerned with the building of national life on right lines so that all progressive and creative forces may pull in the same general direction.

I have discussed in the various chapters of the book some of the most important features of this social order with which education should try to ally itself. It should be a *democratic* order, dedicated to freedom and social justice as ideals, concerned with the provision of equality of opportunity for the development of all citizens and ensuring for them a congenial material and cultural environment for the purpose. This democracy is not to be viewed in the narrow framework of *political* democracy—the illusion produced by the occasional demonstration of the one-man-one-vote idea. It must deepen and broaden out into *social* democracy, which would reject snobbery and stratification on the basis of castes, classes and other artificial divisions and encourage mobility of social intercourse, and into *economic* democracy which seeks to redress the glaring maldistribution of wealth. This maldistribution is not only an economic *malaise* but has created many

grave moral and ethical problems which have had all k
of ugly and disastrous repercussions on modern life. '
social order should welcome the great contribution that moc
science can make to the development of human welfare
many different fields but it should take care to see that scie
is used in the service of that welfare and does not get
of hand to become an instrument of national and internati
exploitation. It should be, in profession as well as prac
what our Constitution has already laid down, i.e. a Sec
State in which persons professing different faiths will h
equal rights and responsibilities and neither favouritism
discrimination will have any place. It needs to be rememb
that these features of the Social Order are not *distantly*
intimately related to education and they have certain def
implications for the ideology, the methods and the organ
tion of education, at all stages. The reconstruction of educa
has, therefore, to be envisaged in their context and to
carried out with reference to the demands made by them

What about Culture? Why has the discussion of Cul
been included as an integral part of the argument of
book? Let me try and state the case for it as clearly
can. When a society is in a relatively stable condit
cultural patterns, gradually forged over long periods of t
grow and change slowly and steadily and go on adap
themselves to the temper of the times. Under such conditi
culture is taken more or less for granted and people are
specially exercised with its basic assumptions which
generally accepted by a majority of people. But in period
quick changes and revolution culture, too, becomes a
issue; many urgent problems are precipitated about w
people have to come to definite decisions or to take sides—
the two things are by no means synonymous, because they
take sides under various kinds of pressure and propaga
without coming to any independent and carefully conside
judgments of their own! We are just now passing thro
such a crisis in our country. The physical, mental
emotional travail through which we have passed during
last few decades, the unsavoury propaganda to which

people were subjected by vested interests, the psychological tensions and mental precipitates left behind by over a century of political subjection and the many unpalatable circumstances attending the birth of our freedom—all these have created a state of cultural confusion and a conflict of values to which no serious minded educationist can remain indifferent. Even without conscious intent, his mind and personality, his attitudes and reactions, his acts of omission and commission are bound to influence the child and his development. Unless, he is content to confine himself to the sphere of formal instruction, to teaching a certain number of prescribed subjects, he must have some understanding of the cultural problems and issues which condition and environ his work. My attempt in this book has been to invite the attention of our teachers, educationists and others interested in the problem of the right orientation of our national future to some of these pressing and significant problems. A magnificent crusade in favour of sound cultural values has been carried on by some of our foremost national leaders—notably Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru and Azad—but there are so many forces and so many lesser and inferior individuals who are working in the opposite direction that these values need to be stressed over and over again from various points of view.

The position that I have taken up in this behalf can be summed up quite briefly. I believe that there is an irreconcilable antithesis between Culture and Prejudice, between Culture and all forms of narrowness which cramp the heart or the mind. I believe that essentially the cultural genius of India has been receptive and hospitable and it has succeeded in assimilating valuable cultural traits and characteristics from many different sources and thereby enriched itself beyond measure. I believe that this confluence of cultures is a providential fact which we should welcome and on the basis of which we should try and work out a broad-based cultural synthesis, conceived not in static but dynamic terms. This will not only be a great achievement for this country but also an example for the rest of the world where, in many places, the clash of cultures has created ugly and unworthy situations.

I believe that, while it is good to seek inspiration from the past and the basic values of the past, we should not lose our sense of perspective and our capacity for criticism and should subject the old and the new alike to a process of continuous and intelligent appraisal, welcoming whatever is significant and worthy, rejecting whatever arrests the progressive forces in life. I believe that much of the pseudo-revivalism that is current today is not only repugnant to the Indian cultural tradition but is positively dangerous, for it is calculated to impoverish our languages, our arts, our music, our social life, our philosophy and our religions. One can well *understand* the reasons that have induced the present mood but one should not humour it or under-estimate its potentiality for evil. I believe that we should—to use a favourite phrase of Jawaharlal Nehru's—"keep the doors and windows of our heart and mind open" not only to the legacy of the ancient and the medieval past but also to all the *modern* trends and developments in the East and West. I believe that the growth of 'Sectionalism' in its varied forms of communalism, provincialism, regionalism, and linguistic conflicts is a threat to the health of our national life and needs to be eradicated. Our Education and Culture must find place within its portals not only for the time-honoured arts and humanities but also for the new-comers, science and technology. We cannot admit the dualism traditionally postulated between culture and vocation or culture and ethics or divorce it from the life-giving concept of Social Justice. These are the many chambers in the House of Culture and anyone who seeks to give a narrow interpretation to culture cramps the living room available for the life of the spirit. And I am convinced that education will not be able to play its part effectively in the building up of a healthy, progressive and decent national life unless it is inspired by some such gracious concept of culture. When I speak of 'education' being so inspired, it is really the *teachers* I have in mind—*they* must be able to build these values and ideals in their personality so far as possible and should, at least, work with them and not against them.

In reading through the final proofs of this book, with a

certain measure of objectivity, I feel that there are two small points that call for some comment. My approach to the various problems discussed here has been mainly *critical*. That is not so because I am inappreciative of the many valuable elements in our Education, our Social Order and our Culture but because I feel that it is the duty of everyone, who values these elements, to ensure that they are purged of all dross and to be on the guard against tendencies which threaten to divert the course of national development into wrong channels. He should have the courage to speak out clearly about controversial issues which fall within his intellectual competence, even though his views may not be popular or fashionable at the moment. People who teach or think or write have not much in the way of worldly goods or influence or prestige which industrialists and plutocrats and politicians possess in such ample measure. But they have their intellectual integrity, their sense of values, their ideas of right and wrong which they cannot afford to put into cold storage. They must assert them, for what they may be worth, with reasoned moderation but without false modesty. This is what I have endeavoured to do in these pages.

Again, readers will find that there are certain basic ideas and values which have been repeatedly stressed in various contexts. I am aware that, from the point of view of literary craftsmanship, such reiteration is not a good thing but I have purposely refrained from eliminating it because I am convinced that these are values which *need* to be stressed over and over again. There is a danger that, in this period of cultural and moral crisis, they may become obscured or overlaid by considerations of expediency or the pull of narrow loyalties. Our teachers will do well to see that they avoid this danger so that their work is inspired by a noble vision of an education devoted to the creation of a broad-based, humanistic Culture and a just and rational Social Order.

K. G. SAIYIDAIN

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The Asian Approach to Culture,
The Spirit of Islamic Culture,
A Plea for Linguistic Sanity, and
Contribution of Universities to National Culture.

"Culture *v.* Prejudice" appeared originally in the publication "Group Prejudices" edited by Nanavati and Vakil, with whose permission it has been included in this book. I should also add that this book was compiled by me before I took over my present post and, in any case, the views expressed in it are my personal views and do not in any way commit the Government of India or the Ministry of Education.

K. G. S.

I

FIRST THINGS FIRST

THERE is perhaps no feature of the modern world which is more striking and characteristic than the quickness with which changes come about so that sometimes even before a book or an article comes out of the press it becomes out of date! While it is true that values and standards do not change quickly and some of them, at any rate, have an abiding significance, the whole socio-political setting and the physical environment in which they have to be worked out are in a state of constant transition and, consequently, they have to be re-interpreted in the light of new conditions. How great is, for example, the gulf between the pre-war world of 1938 and the post-war world of today! Even then the clouds of war were hanging over a terrified and helpless world and, here and there, minor cloud-bursts had occurred. But hope was not yet dead and many blind politicians, who had sown the wind, were foolish enough to think that somehow—by the undeserved intervention of Providence, perhaps!—they might be spared the inevitable penalty of reaping the whirlwind. As if Nature cared more for wishful thinking than for deeds, as if the inexorable laws of retribution could be circumvented by idle prayers or desperate, last-minute compromises! Nothing, however, could arrest the irresistible march of events let loose by decades of narrow-minded and unenlightened dog-in-the-manger policies and so the world was actually plunged into the greatest, the most terrible, the most inhuman catastrophe that history had ever seen. As a curious aftermath of this war, phrases which had become threadbare and insipid, by long and unwarranted usage, have acquired for us a new and urgent and poignantly personal significance. Civilization is, in very truth, in deadly peril; history is really at

one of its great turning points; culture, the gracious fruit of centuries of co-operative effort, and moral values, which distinguish men from the beasts of the jungle, have been mortally challenged in recent decades by the might of brute force which is its own rational and ethical justification and which has been recognised, to an alarming degree as the arbiter between right and wrong, between good and evil. Never in the corridors of human history has such a glaring tragedy been staged—man at the height of his powers behaving infinitely worse than beasts and savages; man prostituting his great intellect, his marvellous powers of organization and his amazing achievements in Science to the destruction and exploitation of his fellow-men! These enormities of crime have come upon us with such speed and violence that our feelings have become stunned and our natural sensitiveness blunted. Perhaps the blind instinct of self-preservation may also have acted unconsciously as a protective agency. Otherwise, I have no doubt that any person, with the normal complement of human sympathies and human decency, who could take an all-embracing view of the world as it is today would either commit suicide or go stark, raving mad! It would appear to him as if this race of human beings had been created by a malignant spirit in a peculiarly malicious mood; as if, having equipped man with all the intellectual and material tools needed to make this world into a decent and reasonable abode for decent and reasonable people, it had capriciously decided to take away from them both reason and decency and infected them with a destructive mania—bent on wrecking not only the lives of their fellowmen but also all that the best of them have cherished as most valuable in life: truth and justice and freedom and reverence and sympathy. It was perhaps a prophetic vision of some such dismal future that made Shakespeare put these immortal lines into the mouth of Macbeth:

> "Out, out brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more; it is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
Signifying nothing!"

I do not know whether many students of our colleges ponder seriously over the dismal condition of their world, over what "man has made of man" in it. But those who do so will certainly find themselves wondering, like Macbeth, whether life is really worth living, whether it is not, in reality, a "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing!" I propose to address myself briefly to this most fundamental of all questions and to show, however imperfectly, that Life is *not* a tale told by an idiot and where it does present the semblance of such a tale, the responsibility must be placed not on some external agency but on the millions of idiots or their misguided leaders, who have bungled their individual and collective lives, reduced to ashes a glorious heritage and jeopardized a great future. If these idiots could be transformed into decent and reasonable human beings, conscious of their own worth and the worth of their fellow-men, life would, indeed, be a different story—realizing, not distorting, the "Increasing Purpose", which poets and prophets and men of vision have always seen running through it.

Let us try and disentangle some of the causes which are responsible for the *impasse* in which society finds itself today, an *impasse* created by war, exploitation, social inequalities and regimentation of ideas. Some of these causes are economic whose most obvious manifestation is the striking maldistribution of wealth, resulting in the existence of great riches and great poverty side by side. Apart from the political rivalries, the social maladjustment, the class conflicts and large-scale exploitation which it brings in its train and which are too well known to need elucidation, it has an almost equally demoralising reaction on the lives both of the very rich and the very poor. Neither of them can rise to the full stature of their manhood or lead a rich and 'abundant' life. Extreme poverty naturally reduces life, for most people, to the level of a mere brutish struggle for living, unillumined

by any gleam of cultural or creative activity. What such a life means in terms of physical exhaustion, of intellectual inertia, of emotional strain and waste of latent capacities constitutes the greatest social tragedy of our times. But it is less generally realised that great wealth, which cuts off its possessor from stimulating social contacts and pre-occupation with socially useful productive work, may often have moral, intellectual and aesthetic implications which are almost as disastrous as those of extreme poverty. The "indecently rich" man often becomes isolated from those deep and fundamental sources of happiness which lie in creative and constructive work carried on in a social context. In a deeply moving study of Henry Ford's life, entitled "Little Steel", Upton Sinclair, whom I regard not only as a great writer but as one of the greatest of contemporary social historians, has shown how, with the phenomenal increase of wealth which followed the expansion of the motor car industry, Henry Ford was irresistibly transformed from a decent, genial and sympathetic soul into a suspicious, repressed and cloistered person who had to build up a whole hierarchy of secretaries, policemen, detectives and other minions around him, thus cutting himself off from natural and spontaneous intercourse with his fellow-men. Another brilliant American economist of the last century, Thorstein Veblen—who, I am afraid, is studied far too little in this country—has analysed in his "Theory of the Leisure Class", with biting but irrefutable irony, how members of this unfortunate class are condemned by their very position to lead a life of "conspicuous idleness" and "conspicuous waste", as that is the only way in which they can "justify" themselves in their own eyes and gain "prestige" in the eyes of their inferiors! Every increase in their financial status involves their further removal from life-giving activities and a clogging up of the normal and healthy functioning of general social life. It seems quite clear to me, therefore, that no better Social Order can come into existence till an irresistible movement in favour of Social Justice abolishes these great economic anomalies. And, cynical as it may sound, neither culture nor moral values have any mean-

any chance of coming into their own so long as a rea-
ɜ minimum of creature needs and comforts is not as-
to the masses of the people. I am well aware that, in
s, there have been a few great and exceptional spirits—
ts, mystics, social servants, seekers after truth—who
ible to rise above the needs of the flesh and find their
lf-expression in certain spiritual and intellectual chan-
Of these I shall speak to you later. But the only pos-
ociety that we can visualise is one not of saints and
but of ordinary men and women for whom the de-
of material life must take precedence over the life of
rit. In any case, it does not lie in the mouth of those
ve been generously gifted with the good things of life
ch renunciation to their less fortunate brethren. And,
is the true remedy for human ills, they may well re-
Physician, why not heal thyself first?

ur search for the characteristic nature of contempo-
e, we cannot, however, stop short at *noting* the fact of
ic disparity; we must go further and ask ourselves
r there is some reason, in the very nature of things,
large majority of men should be condemned to a life
ation and want. If so, perhaps an attitude of sullen
cence in what exists will not be unreasonable. But,
en that consolation is denied to us and the bungling
ers of our collective life cannot take shelter behind
e of defence! The marvellous progress made by the
l and Biological Sciences during the last hundred
as so enormously multiplied man's powers of produc-
at there is no reason whatever why poverty and want
not be abolished, why, with only a four hours' working
ough goods and services should not be produced to
d clothe and house people decently, to build schools
spitals and theatres and sanatoria for them, and gene-
ɔ bring the fruits of Art and Science and Culture with-
reach of all who value them and have the capacity to
rom them.

eason, did I say, why all these good things should not
le available for all? No reason undoubtedly—except

human stupidity, greed and injustice which cannot be dismissed as either minor or negligible factors! If we had the vision and the goodwill to press Science into the service of man instead of using it as an engine of exploitation and tyranny, life would be neither idiotic nor immoral but a just and rational business. Is it not curious that we use our great ingenuity and powers for constructing fine instruments and machines and then use them in ways which are morally reprehensible and intellectually idiotic? Our predicament today is rather like that of a half-witted monkey fiddling with the controls of a powerful Rolls Royce machine! The reason for all this tragic mishap does not, therefore, lie in "the nature of things", as is sometimes lazily or cleverly made out! It lies in our own unenlightened and uneducated minds. We lack the moral and the intellectual vision to use our opportunities properly and waste our energies in fratricidal conflicts, in fighting against truth, in denying our hard-won humanity, in gathering "grapes of wrath" from the tree of life. We have no doubt improved our *means* and our technique of work but the *ends* that we pursue are still unedified and unedifying. And thus we see the causes passing from the economic into the moral and ethical domain, demonstrating the eternal link-up of all phases and aspects of human life.

It is clear, therefore, that there are two main lines along which we must follow our quest. How far does our intellectual training enable us to see our way clearly in the bewildering complexity that constitutes modern life, and how can we redress its admitted inadequacy? Secondly, what is our moral and emotional equipment for dealing with these problems? What are the values and ideals which guide, and should guide, our trained intellect? In this matter, as many keen thinkers have observed, both the East and the West have tended to go astray. I have already referred to the modern worship of Science in the West which, generally speaking, has come to regard the rational intellect as an *all sufficient* guide for human conduct. With due recognition of the place of Intellect in life,* we must admit that that is not

* *Vide* Chapter on "Education for a Better Social Order."

the *whole* truth. This one-sided view has resulted in an anomaly—the yawning gap between the technical and moral progress of the European nations. In the East—including our own country—there has been, on the contrary, a long-standing tendency to divorce 'Intellect' from 'Virtue', to deprecate the former in some measure and to exalt the latter as all-sufficient. This view seems to imply that the evils of the world can be overcome by the unthinking practice of certain actions classed as 'virtuous' and that the discerning intellect need not be regarded as supremely important. Hence a certain good-natured tolerance of stupidity on our part; hence the exaggerated respect shown to "holy" men who often act—or sometimes merely refrain from all action!—without thought; hence the exalting of the dogma over the quest, of the given certainty over the restless questioning mind. Not that Eastern thought or philosophy, at its best, offers any valid justification for this attitude. Buddhism has, for example, classed *stupidity* which it calls *"unawareness"* amongst the cardinal sins —it is not something to be complacently tolerated but an evil to be actively eradicated. The Quran, likewise, insists that the path of salvation is the path of strenuous thinking, observation and contemplation, that the atrophy of the intellect is the high road to moral and spiritual death. It condemns in unambiguous words those who fail, or refuse, to make the most of their faculties:

> "They have minds but they heed not, eyes but they see not, ears but they hear not; they are like the beasts or even worse. Truly are they benighted!"

What does this emphatic assertion of the value of Intellect imply? It demands that we, whose minds have been quickened by education, should not accept uncritically the framework of our social life and institutions but must learn to probe into the socio-political as well as the ethico-moral bases of our society. Unfortunately, however, most of the forces that play on our life from childhood upwards tend to produce *conformity* rather than individuality or independence of

thought, and all the vested interests—political, economic and even religious—are anxious to clip the wings of the critical intellect. What are the agencies in contemporary life that influence the minds of people most powerfully? Mass education, which has been dubbed by a discerning writer as "goose step"; the public platform which, thanks to mechanical aids, gives the demagogue an opportunity to dominate and influence the immature minds of an uneducated, or ill-educated democracy in any direction he chooses; the cheap daily press, controlled by financial interests, which forms the intellectual food, and controls the opinions of the literate public; and the commercialised cinema, radio and theatre which shape (or more often corrupt) our musical, dramatic and artistic tastes. To these may be added, so far as our country is concerned, many powerful organizations which have been playing on peoples' fears and superstitions in the name of Religion. Is it any wonder, then, that these means of controlling men's ideas, judgments and reactions place a heavy premium on 'gregarious' thinking and discount individuality and creative thought? Most of our young men and women educated in Colleges manage to pass through the entire educational grind-mill without so much as becoming aware of the great social, economic and cultural issues that dominate the age. Many of them are certainly interested in Politics—where a certain amount of ill-assimilated radicalism has passed into a fashion —but even there they are content to take their opinions on trust from a plausible speaker, a casual book or, perhaps most frequently, from the papers that they might happen to fancy. They are no less suggestible than the uneducated people, and extreme suggestibility is an enemy to thought and a pestilential breeding ground for petty dictators and unscrupulous leaders. One of the many minor sorrows attached to my official position has been to interview large numbers of candidates for service and, every time, I get a fresh thrill of amazement and dismay at the incredibly thin and meagre intellectual fare on which many of them manage to subsist during the most formative years of their intellectual life in colleges. The fascinating world of ideas, and the strenuous

activity of thought, are practically unknown to them; for *study*, in the significant sense of the word, forms no part of their mental life. In so far as some of us are associated with the work of education we must in all fairness accept our share of the responsibility and the blame for this state of things. But apportionment of blame is, unfortunately, no remedy; what is required is an acute realization on the part of our teachers and students alike that one of the primary objectives of intellectual education is to awaken and *train the critical and questioning mind* without which it is impossible, in this world of "plural possibilities", to make our way either safely or successfully. They should try to cultivate this fearless and creative intelligence which will be wedded to truth and justice, however unpopular, impatient of shams and hypocrisies, however attractive, impervious to the spurious appeal of the propaganda stunts by which unscrupulous politicians manipulate people for their unworthy ends, unwilling to take things on trust and insistent on a fair and dispassionate examination of *all* issues and problems. We will do well to remember that there is no justification for every mentally lazy fool fancying himself a great thinker and that mental sloth is as great a crime as moral insensibility. I feel that anyone who passes through the University with a superficial study of about a dozen text books is morally a cheat and intellectually a humbug, bcause he pretends to be what he is not. It is only the burning of the now-somewhat-decried "midnight oil" in the cause of dispassionate search for truth that can enrich and liberate the mind.

If, therefore, we have integrity of spirit, we must learn to lead *intellectually strenuous* lives; we must study deeply and widely, cultivating the capacity to appreciate meanings instead of memorising words and breaking through the rigid and narrow specialism of curricular subjects into the domain of knowledge that really illuminates. We should appreciate how knowledge and life play upon one another and how this results in their mutual enrichment. Without such understanding, knowledge is apt to remain superficial and stunted and life becomes cramped and unprogressive. This is the

justification for the plea that has been recently put in various quarters for introducing "General Educatior "Great Issues" Courses in the universities which wil across rigid "subject" divisions in the curricula and e *all* students to learn something of the values of literatur culture, to understand the place of science and appr social problems of the modern world. Some of you perhaps retort in self-defence: Why should we lead "intellectually strenuous" life when, at the end of our e tional career, all that many of us have to look forward at best a pittance, insufficient even for our primary n and at the worst a demoralising and fruitless searcl employment which eludes us? I can certainly sympa with the sentiment of discontent and indignation that u lies this attitude but the argument ignores the some obvious fact that, under no circumstances, is a stupi culturally barren mind preferable to an intelligent and tured mind. It is true that, in the existing order of So with its economic *malaisé*, even highly educated persons find it difficult to secure suitable opportunities of worl there is great maladjustment between available and workers. It would not be right, however, to put the blame on an external, impersonal agency called So Apart from the fact that *individuals* like you and me c tute Society and are ultimately responsible in some measure for its pattern and behaviour, we cannot well that our educated classes have often chosen the lazy pa least resistance and not reacted dynamically to the situa forging out new lines of activity, with courage and initia If education could really train our minds and character perly, we should not be so helpless and hopeless as we often inclined to be.

Students in the colleges and universities are faced, how not only with the problem of livelihood but also with anc lively question which has aroused great controversy: Sh they take part in politics? In the recent past, before attained our political freedom, it was confidently assume the official circles that they should do nothing of the

It was considered to be obviously improper and dangerous. On the other hand, the nationalist circles generally assumed, equally confidently, that they should do so—when freedom's battle was joined, how could they watch it unconcerned? To the former, even the study of politics and expression of political opinions on the part of students seemed scandalous. The latter wanted them to take a practical part in the political struggle. Whatever the merits of that controversy—and I feel that both were mistaken in varying measure—the nature of the situation and the form of political work and activity have now changed and it is necessary to define the relationship of students to politics afresh. Should students take part in politics? Assuredly, for it is one of the most important functions of education to train students for the duties of "creative citizenship" and Politics is primarily the study and organization of civic life, in the larger sense. But—and it is an essential if rather vexatious "but"!—they must honestly and strenuously equip themselves for this most responsible task; half-baked ideas and confused minds are not suitable equipment for the field of Politics. It does not matter so much to what school of thought a person belongs; but it *does* matter profoundly whether he has honestly and intelligently come by his opinions and has accepted them according to the best of his lights or has merely borrowed them from some glib salesman who can play on his feelings and prejudices. I have no doubt that many of our students have the natural and laudable ambition to become political workers. Before they decide to take this plunge, however, they should ask themselves whether they possess the intellectual clarity, devotion to public good and the moral courage which this form of national service demands. They might also, as an interesting psychological problem and as a warning, analyse by what means many inferior persons have managed to step on to the coveted pedestal of leadership. They will find that, in many cases, such leadership does not imply a fearless advocacy of truth and fair play in the face of the public opposition, because that requires an uncommon degree of moral integrity and courage; it is usually achieved through a passive follow-

ing of current passions and prejudices. Such person generally clever enough to guess what a majority of the informed and misguided followers or would-be followers and feel about certain issues and they act as megaphone their unenlightened passions and prejudices! By giving to them in an exaggerated measure what they are not enough to express themselves, they step into a cheap easy leadership. On a grand scale, we can see a manifest of this psychological phenomenon in the case, for examp Hitler who cleverly exalted the Germans' dislike of Jew a political and religious dogma, and for pettier manifesta we need not go far afield! There are so many evils and judices—provincial, religious, linguistic, cultural—in our immediate neighbourhood. We not only complacently a them but often build the super-structure of our petty le ships on the advocacy and exploitation of these unlovely unlovable separatisms. If this is the type of leadersh which they might feel attracted I would beg of them to the temptation. It would do this harassed world no go have more of such mentally soft and morally feeble leade

Let us now examine the other aspect of the modern r dilemma. Given this higher standard of intellectual trai will it suffice by itself to create a better social order in v the average citizen will not feel that his life is an idiot's I must frankly confess that it will not. If that were sc West which is scientifically and educationally more adv. than we are, should have succeeded in solving the many : and ethical problems which embitter its life. Actuall find, however, that many of the finest spirits of the whose eyes have not become dazzled by the technical adv of their own civilization, are seriously wondering wh they have not paid too high a price for this scientific prog For Intellect is, after all, a double-edged weapon which be put to any use, good, bad or indifferent, and the important consideration is *how* this weapon is to be wie In the Persian poet Saadi's parable, the pick-axe is the useful tool. What are you going to do with it—cut fire or bring down the walls of the mosque? What, in other w

are the moral and social values of the person or the group that is to make use of it? In answering this question, I shall take as my starting point a remark by a noble-minded Frenchman Dr. Marett, which clothes in words of great simplicity a thought of profound significance. "All true progress," he contends, "is progress in *Charity,* every other progress being secondary to it." What does this innocuous looking statement imply? It is really a revolutionary criterion for evaluating the worth of every kind of progress that man has made or may make in the future. What, for example, are the great advances on which the modern age prides itself—scientific development, increase in knowledge, rapid means of communication, industrialisation, dissemination of literacy and an efficient political organization. In assessing their value, we must ask ourselves how far they have succeeded in promoting this *"charity"* amongst men and nations—charity which includes sympathy, tolerance, fellowship and trust—and in building bridges of understanding across things that have tended to divide man from man and nation from nation. For, it is charity alone, in the sense that I have indicated, which can ensure that these things will be a boon and not a calamity for mankind. Some things that science has given us have certainly been almost entirely beneficial. The progress of the medical science, inspired at least partly by charity, has resulted in easing pain, improving health and prolonging life, and many doctors—the genuine scientific workers, not commercial-minded quacks!—are ceaselessly striving to unravel the mysteries of the human body and to find effective means of curing its ailments. Progress in Psychology has given us a new slant on the life and the mind of the difficult children, the delinquents, the criminals and the lunatics. We are not so ready now to treat them as offsprings of Satan, deserving various degrees of torture, but rather as victims of circumstances for which the rest of us are at least as responsible as they are. Education and legislation are consequently tending to become more liberal and humane and, in industrial countries, measures have been adopted to soften the rigours of life for the long disinherited and mercilessly treated proletariat.

There is also, amongst many small groups of radical intellectuals, a keener sympathy for oppressed nations and classes and a movement in favour of securing better economic justice. Again, progress in Physical Sciences has brought certain amenities and amusements within the reach of a much larger number of people but, considering their quality, that can only be reckoned as a somewhat dubious blessing!

This practically sums up the credit side of the balance sheet. The debit side is, I am afraid, heavier. Generally speaking, the progress of Science and Industrialism has resulted, as we have seen, *not* in the sharing of material goods and social services more equitably and levelling down economic disparities, but in a more thorough and efficient exploitation of man by man and class by class. Monstrous and dreadful engines of torture have been invented, culminating in the Atom and Hydrogen Bombs, which have made wars infinitely more inhuman than ever before in history. The factory system has reduced men, who were craftsmen, into mere appendages of the machines that they operate so that they find no opportunities for creative self-expression either in their work or their leisure; for, even amusements have been mechanised and stereotyped. Literacy has certainly increased—it has even become universal in certain countries—but knowledge, good taste, wisdom and culture—which are the gracious fruits of knowledge—have lingered behind. Unscrupulous demagogues exploit this literacy, through the press and the radio, to dragoon people into irrational and immoral ways of thinking to suit their own ends. The newer trends in political organization have resulted in substituting for the worship of a personal God or devotion to Absolute Values—which are apt to be looked upon now as rather mythical and old-fashioned—the worship of new and bloodthirsty gods like the Nation, the State, the Chosen Race or the Dictator, and what these false deities have exacted from men in terms of blood and suffering, of intellectual slavery and the denial of moral values, puts into shade all that older religious fanaticism and crusading fervour may have entailed. Under their powerful control, education has been directed towards arresting the

growth of an all-embracing charity that might have cut across the distinctions of caste and creed and colour, of race and nationality and faith. Our nobler feelings are being deliberately cramped within rigid and narrow frontiers. Sympathy will go thus far and no further; charity will not only begin at home but also, preferably, end there! Tolerance, when extended to an adversary, is not a virtue but a weakness, which should be crushed. Justice and fairplay are all right in private dealings but need not be enforced in business, in industry and in group relationships. In international politics, they are held to be dangerous in peace time and definitely criminal in war! The common people often lack the understanding to realize that it is *not* in their interest, either economically or morally, to forego this most precious heritage of a common humanity which they share even with all their so-called adversaries. It is not lack of charity alone but, as Bertrand Russell has somewhere pointed out, it is also the lack of imagination which blunts our sensitiveness and sympathy. He points out how, to an average Englishman—or anyone else for that matter—a flood or an epidemic in China is just a flood or an epidemic—an item of news in a daily paper stating that so many thousand persons have been killed or rendered destitute. He is incapable of translating these cold figures into living and moving pictures of what they imply—lives uprooted, families wiped out, hopes dashed to the ground and all the suffering associated with poverty, hunger and disease. And dare we, in all honesty, claim that *we* have been less indifferent to these stark realities than our contemporaries in the West? Our disgraceful communal squabbles and riotings, our social barriers and caste restrictions, our religious intolerance and our complacent acceptance of widespread poverty, ignorance and disease would give us the lie if we were ill-advised enough to make any such claim. In fact, in the matter of the organization of the social services—which are a good index of the sensitiveness of the collective social conscience—we must confess to a marked inferiority in comparison with countries like the U.S.S.R., U.K. and the United States. It is only during recent decades, par-

ticularly since the attainment of independence, that started making a concerted national effort to tackle t blems. But in the deceptive bustle of 'progress' the charity is not yet playing its full part. Can you, then that, in the mouths of many sensitive people with a co the fruit of progress tastes bitter?

And yet all great religions have always preac sometimes practised, charity and placed it higher th and dogma and worship. That is what the "brothe man" and "fatherhood of God" have always imp Buddha, one of the finest spirits that has ever gr dark abode of misery, the primary and most do single fact about this life was the pain and destituti which millions of human beings suffer and, so acute consciousness of this suffering and so generous and neous his response to it—in other words, so sincere embracing was his charity—that he renounced hi princely ease and power and ambition and voluntar a life of poverty to preach charity, tolerance and Why did Christ affirm, in the land of the Pharisees, rich man will not enter the portals of the kingdom of till the camel has passed through the eye of the nee cause the Pharisee lacked the humanising touch of s with his poorer fellow-men. Why did the Prophet o and his associates deny to themselves even the ordi cessities of life? Because they wished to share the experiences of the poorest amongst themselves and themselves apart from the common run of people. " I sleep with a well-fed stomach," remarked Ali when the Caliph, "so long as there is a single hungry pers capital of Medina?" and, in saying so, he was voicin inner conviction, not expressing a platform platitu Religion, as a living and dynamic force, has gone ou lives and no irresistible social idealism has taken with the result that we find ourselves actively *regr* charity and in reverence for moral and human val mankind dances forward blindly to its richly deserve

As I glance through what I have written I feel tha

drawn a very gloomy picture and this may strike you as anomalous because I had set out to show that life is not an 'idiot's tale'. I have done so purposely in order to put before you a true picture of contemporary life as I see it, for no one can achieve anything who is afraid to look at truth, however unpleasant it may be, full in the face. I have also tried to suggest that all this is not the doing of any malicious Supernatural Power but the result of our own collective stupidity, our lack of vision and courage, our hesitation to take risks and our intellectual and emotional narrowness. We must learn to envisage this gloomy picture as a challenge. Youth is born to fight and, perhaps never before in the history of mankind, has a greater challenge been offered by destiny to men of charity, courage and goodwill to fight against the evils and perversions of thought that are poisoning the sources of our essential humanity. But one might well turn round and ask: That may sound all right as platform rhetoric; but what can I, or a few hundred or a few thousand of us, do against such overwhelming odds? How can we hope to succeed where the labours of philosophers and religious reformers and the frantic efforts of politicians have failed? And, in any case, what *is* the way out of this *impasse?* I confess that I have no easy, fool-proof, open-sesame formula; nor can any simple recipe meet such a difficult and complex situation. I might possibly say that good education—whose methods and ideology are carefully thought out and related to desirable objectives—is at least, *one* very powerful factor in the process of social reconstruction. But I realise also the limitations of this reply: Good education cannot pull its full weight except in a good, i.e. a justly and rationally planned, social environment. If the activities and institutions that constitute our social fabric are based on greed, rivalry, exploitation and injustice, how can even the best of schools and colleges inculcate abiding habits of co-operation, unselfishness, charity and service? On the other hand, how can we transform an immoral and competitive society into a moral and co-operative social organism until the minds and emotions of ordinary men and women are trained along more sensible and healthy lines?

It is the old, old riddle:

دل صاف ہو کس طرح کہ انصاف نہیں ہے
انصاف ہو کس طرح کہ دل صاف نہیں ہے

How can justice be secured when the heart is not free fror
And how can the heart be free from rancour, when there is

As a matter of fact, social mal-organization and cational pattern are tied up together in a vicious the problem of reform, as Aldous Huxley neatly "the problem of breaking out of a vicious circle anc up a virtuous one in its place". That is really the and unless we—or some of us, at any rate—can s circle somewhere, we shall remain caught in its toi

How can this be done? In this matter there are tw schools of thought. Determined political groups, Fascists and the Communists, believe—and there posing array of evidence in their favour—that the i is conditioned by his environment and, by transfor environment, we can change the social and mental at the people. A competitive society, the Communists breeds exploiters and aggressive captains of indust operatively planned society will replace the motive dual profit by that of social service and love for w religious reformers and psychologists, on the other h always placed greater stress on the individual than c zations and preferred to adopt the method of indiv proach in the belief that only such beneficial cha abide as are spontaneously willed or accepted by th

We are not, however, called upon to adjudicate a tively between these two methods because our prob obstinate and complicated that it can only be solved if it simultaneously on all fronts. But even if we con

the replanning of the social environment is the most effective or the only method of reform, the question immediately arises: Who is going to do it? How shall we generate the motive power for the purpose? Who will consent to take up the difficult task of belling the cat? One reply to it can be—and it is often given—that a superman or, in modern political parlance, a 'dictator' will arise who will "get things done". That, to my mind, is a counsel of despair—for more reasons than one. Supermen cannot be created at will and, till chance creates one, shall we wait impotently and with folded hands without bestirring ourselves for our own good, knowing well that inexorable Time waits at no one's pleasure? Again, dictators are a dubious proposition and there is no method whatever of ensuring that they will turn out to be either benevolent or reasonable. Even an entirely well-meaning person is not only likely but almost certain to lose his head when drunk with power, for there is no greater intoxication for the human ego. Thirdly, Psychology upholds the contention of men of religion that reforms, imposed from outside by force, often miscarry and are never permanent. Dictators being thus barred out as desirable instruments of reform, what is the other alternative? The Communist creed suggests a rather intriguing idea in this connection. It holds that sometimes—rather like a biological variation in an otherwise respectably conservative species!—a few members of the 'bourgeoisie' manage to 'declass' themselves, i.e. cut themselves adrift from their own group, and then they proceed, against their own obvious class interests, to work for the formation of a "classless" society. I venture to suggest that at this point, unconsciously, the prophet and the communist meet on more or less common ground. Both accept the position that no great and desirable social or moral change can be initiated unless there is a small group of selfless and determined persons so devoted to a particular creed or ideology that they would be prepared to give up their comfort and privileges and all the temptations of worldly success for the sake of their cherished ideals. And history, undoubtedly, confirms this view. If we study the growth of any great religious or social

or political movement or any great material or spiritual achievement on the part of a community, we will find that success was primarily due to such a band of selfless workers who were prepared to suffer persecution, to brave the rack and the guillotine and to court cheerfully the tortures of martyrdom so that the truth that is in them may shine brightly and its flame may illumine other hearts. Nothing in the world is so compelling or contagious—neither armies, nor rhetoric, nor the power of money—as the power of sincerity and sacrifice. Brute force as well as worldly temptations shatter themselves hopelessly against the truly godly person or persons—however few they might be—who have realised the full strength of their individuality and are inspired by the love of some great cause. In the words of Iqbal:

> "When the sword of Individuality is sharpened on
> the whetstone of Love,
> A single soldier's blow does the work of an army!"

There has been no greater manifestation of this truth in our age than the personality of Mahatma Gandhi who apparently achieved the 'seemingly impossible' not only on the political but also on the moral plane.

Now, such persons must possess certain definite qualities if they are to succeed in their difficult mission. They must have intellectual clarity, for confused thinking is as harmful as moral dishonesty; they must have courage, physical as well as mental, to brave opposition, ridicule and unpopularity; they must possess idealism and what is more, the right ideals; they must be sensitive to the needs and the sorrows of their fellow-men and have the will and capacity to strive in their behalf and, above all, they must possess, what Aldous Huxley has called, the quality of "*non-attachment*" and what Iqbal calls "*Faqr*". Curiously, these two thinkers, so far apart in their intellectual background, attach equal value to this quality which does not, indeed, require a renunciation of the world but the capacity to rise above the temptations of wealth and fame and power which ensnare the feet and the minds of most

worldly men. Nothing produces greater fear and timidity in man than attachment to these material objects and selfish ambitions, for the constant dread of losing them haunts him day and night. Love of money has been called "the root of all evil" because it leads to all kinds of unscrupulous actions and unworthy compromises and makes it impossible for the covetous person *to place first things first,* which is the highest and the most significant moral imperative. Iqbal's *"Faqr"* possesses a kind of superior detachment, a sense of personal worthfulness and integrity and a love for the things of the spirit which enables him, even after he has conquered the world (i.e. his own small world), to reject it as unworthy of his highest devotion. His dreams and ideals, his curiosity and quest, his creative work and social service are literally more to him than rubies and diamonds or the pride of power and possessions. It is this *"Faqr"* which gives an individual the high courage that brooks no danger and yields to no temptation and which even the fear of death cannot quench.

This then is the 'impossible' demand that I make upon our leaders of education. Whether they dream of a world revolution or more modestly of a transformation of our own small group or community or country, they must try, through education and other formative agencies, to train groups of young men and women gifted with these qualities of the head and the heart and possessed of a passion for social justice. I have dared to place before them this difficult ideal, knowing that the ideal is, by definition, the unattainable. But the more we can cultivate our critical intelligence and deepen our sympathies, the more we are able to cast the mantle of our love and charity on all human beings—not barring out those who may have a dark rather than a fair complexion or a snub rather than an aquiline nose or a manual rather than an academic occupation—the more we learn to appreciate the essential, inescapable kinship of men of all castes and creeds and colours, the nearer shall we approximate to our ideal. And there is no reason why, in our own little spheres, we should not be able to strive towards this goal. Surely, it is a terrific slur on our higher education that it gives us neither

greater understanding nor greater charity. Intellectual often leave the Colleges without a quickening either interests or our intelligence; morally, we are often no than the so-called man-in-the-street so far as the brea mind or the generosity of emotions is concerned. God surely be proud of what we have achieved—we, who ar posed to have been made in His own image! We have Him a poor return, indeed, for a great compliment.

In spite of our educational advantages, we have not to distinguish between the really good things of life a cheap tinsel which dazzles the eyes or appeals to the ap And even when we *do* theoretically distinguish between our practical life remains at the inferior level. The h function of Education is to teach our students *to plac things first* and to mould the pattern of their thought an duct accordingly. If they fail to do so, they will be f in life whatever their obvious achievements; if they car to do so, everything else that is really valuable will be ' unto them".

II

EDUCATION FOR A BETTER SOCIAL ORDER

I

EDUCATION in India is passing at present through a very critical but interesting phase. This is natural because national life as a whole, of which education is an integral part, is also passing through such a phase. The educational reconstruction which is being tried in various States has to take two aspects of the problem into account. There is the *technical* side of educational reform which calls for an improvement of methods and curricula, better organization and co-ordination of its various stages, a more efficient supervision and inspection of schools and, of course, the rapid expansion of the existing educational facilities, particularly in the rural areas. This is the kind of work that Departments of Education have been trying to do, satisfactorily or otherwise, for many years, within the rigid limitations set for them by financial considerations. But the far-reaching social, political, economic and cultural changes which have taken place in India during the last half a century—slowly at first but with increasing speed during the last 20 years or so—have confronted the educationists with a new set of problems which had not clearly challenged the attention of earlier workers in the field. They were not faced—or they *did* not, at least, face—the problem of evolving and working out any new *ideology* of education which would take into account these new urges of national life, and respond to the genuine ideals and aspirations of the Indian people. There were few serious attempts to examine the basic foundations of the educational system or to interpret its bearings on the important and

dynamic problems and forces of national life. For the educationists " the new education" meant "English edu —an education which gave a prominent place to the st the English language, and which in the higher stages u English as the medium of instruction. In its general : zation and technique it followed mechanically the sys education which existed in England in the 19th century while education in England was a growing and living ment responding to new impulses in English nation Indian education remained out of contact and out o with national life. This was due to a variety of factors foreign Government was, by its peculiar position, unv incapable and ill-qualified to undertake this task. Th gencies of the political situation, on the other har absorbed some of the best brains of the country that cu issues, amongst which education occupies the foremost did not receive their due share of attention and were ne in comparison with more insistent political problems. there can be no denying the accusation that educatior whole failed to play its full part either in reconstructi social order or in evolving a new and congenial patt culture. In fact, it must be admitted that serious thougl not given to fundamental educational issues at all till paratively recently, Gandhiji formulated his scheme of Education which adopted a radically new approach t problem of the education of the masses. ✓

It may be said that this should have been largely the tion of educationists and teachers themselves—in sc colleges and universities. They, however, failed to c partly because they have been so overwhelmed by the n nical and routine aspects of their activity that they unable to view the situation steadily and as a whole. is a great danger which besets the work of all teachers— threatens, in fact, all those who are engaged in any cr activity involving a good deal of prescribed routine. In preoccupation with the day-to-day problems, they are lose sight of the underlying objectives, purposes and which their activity is designed to serve and may find

selves helplessly caught in the pressure of daily routine, unable to take their bearings intelligently in the world of physical phenomena and spiritual forces which environ them. This is not a mere theoretical apprehension. It is an ever present practical problem, challenging the mind and professional integrity of teachers. The entire history of education is a sobering demonstration of the truth that education often tends to lag behind the renaissant forces and needs of human life and teachers are apt to rely on methods and assumptions which may have been valid in the past but are no longer adequate and suitable in the contemporary situation. This accounts for the curious fact that the development of educational theory and practice has often proceeded by means of jerks. Sometimes the emergence of some great educationist of vision or of a group of creative educational thinkers startles the static, self-complacent educational world into a realization of its backwardness. It becomes suddenly aware of the great social and intellectual changes which have been reshaping, as it were, the theatre of its activity without, however, having impinged on its consciousness! An attempt is then made, with varying degrees of success, to link education more closely to the needs and the ideals of the age and to rid it, so far as possible, of dead traditions and practices hindering its liberation. This has been an oft repeated pattern in the history of educational progress.

If this has been true in the past—and no serious student of educational history would question it—it is much more emphatically and imperatively true of our own age, the most characteristic feature of which is *change*—quick, continuous, universal change in ideas as well as social institutions. Never in the whole history of the human race has there been such a state of flux in human affairs. During the last two hundred years, the material and intellectual conditions of our existence have been transformed beyond recognition. When Bergson expounded his philosophy of Creative Evolution, and stressed the fact that Change and *Becoming* rather than *Being* were the only reality in the Universe, he was not only giving expression to a truth having general applicability but also

directing our attention to the most characteristic featur modern life and civilization. No group or community expect to play its role effectively and successfully in modern world unless its mind and behaviour have attuned to this situation and its capacity for progressiv justment and adaptation has been quickened and discipli This fact constitutes a persistent challenge to modern ed tion which it dare not ignore except at the risk of redu itself to futility. For, educational problems do not take t birth in an academic vacuum; they arise in response to, gain their characteristic colour from, the existing social, tical, economic and moral climate. If education fails to cognizance of these factors and the far-reaching cha which are happening all round, it is overwhelmed by t and is unable to offer any sound guidance to the coming g ration. But the ignorance or the indifference of most pec including teachers, to this situation and the tenacity which they cling unthinkingly to obsolete ways of thought truly amazing. Their attitude is reminiscent of what H Wells has said of his old mother in his 'Experiment in A biography':

> "Vast unprecedented forces beyond her ken were stea destroying the social order . . . to which her beliefs attuned and on which all her confidence was based. To these mighty changes in human life presented themse as a series of perplexing frustrations and undeserved fortunes for which nothing or nobody was clearly to blar

In the face of this situation, it is the imperative duty o educational workers—teachers, administrators and educati thinkers who are gifted with some intelligence and ima tion—to abstract themselves occasionally from their me lous preoccupation with the daily routine and to por seriously over the question: What are the *real* objectives purposes of the activity in which we are engaged, in the text of our national and international life? Are the me and methods adopted by us likely to lead towards their r

zation? If education were merely synonymous with the teaching of a number of formal subjects to more or less reulctant pupils—as some teachers seem to think and demonstrate in their work—then the prospect before the teaching profession would be bleak and depressing indeed! But happily that is not so, for the *real* nature of education partakes of the quality of a joyous human adventure in which the teacher sets out to create a new world, first in the life and mind of his pupils and then, indirectly but surely, in the outside world of men and affairs. As Iqbal remarked in his Preface to the 'Secrets of the Self' many decades ago:

> "The nations of the East should clearly realize that Life cannot create any revolution in its environment unless it takes place first in the depths of its own being and no new world can come into existence unless it is first framed in the minds and spirits of individual men and women. It is an inevitable law of Nature which the Holy Quran has expressed in simple but significant words:
>
> 'Verily God does not alter the fortunes of a nation until they bring about a change in their own psychology.'
>
> This is applicable with equal validity to individual and collective life."

It is in bringing about this inner psychological revolution that education must play its special part and educationists should so reconstruct educational theory and practice that it will take into account all the vital forces which are reshaping the modern world and thus help to orient the growing generations towards a better and humaner social order.

It should, however, be remembered that there is no watertight separation between what I have called the "technical" and what may be called the "vital" side of educational reform, for all technical changes in the methods and the curriculum must inevitably react on the minds and spirits of the boys and girls in schools and bias them in certain definite directions.

We have seen a striking demonstration of this truth in effect which the present predominantly bookish educa obsessed with the idea of securing certain kinds of jobs services, has had on the educated generation. It has cut t off from the interests and occupations of the masses and n them an isolated class which has not been able to pull its per weight in national life. Similarly, if any attempt is n to reorganize the "vital" side of education, it will imperati demand its own techniques and involve a reconsider and modification of methods, curricula, organization discipline in all educational institutions. With due re nition of this close interdependence, I shall deal here m with certain significant features of the new socio-educati ideology which should inspire our work.

II

It is necessary for our teachers and other social and poli workers to grasp clearly the nature of the forces which operating in modern life and confronting us with a bewi ing complexity of new problems. The most powerful f in this process of social change and disintegration has the development of *Science* which has not only acceler those changes but also brought them more effectively u our conscious control, giving us the power of intellige participating in them and directing them instead of actin blind victims of an inexorable Fate. It has, so to sp reshuffled the properties of the world-stage on which has been playing his part and altered the outlines and b daries of the physical universe. What is perhaps even r remarkable is the change it has brought about in the tr tional view of the world and our old habits of thought action. Man lives his life today in a patently changing, d mic world "in which the stable and the precarious are i tricably intertwined, in which there are, at every step, 'pl possibilities' offering choice and discrimination to the vidual, in which all experience is adventurous, on-going progressive". In a sense this has always been so, but

recent advances in Science have accentuated this fact and made it an urgent, practical issue. In almost all realms of human thought and endeavour, Science rejects the idea of a static goal or a predetermined finality. This unfinished, 'open' world demands the active, intelligent and resourceful co-operation of all individuals for its progressive development and fulfilment. Hence the most important intellectual quality, which individuals need in a world of this description, is *Creative Intelligence* constantly exercising itself on the old as well as the new problems and situations which may arise in such an environment. In the words of Professor Dewey who states this position with extreme emphasis, "All that the school can and need do for the pupils, so far as their minds are concerned, is to develop their ability to think".

The educational problem which this situation precipitates raises many issues about our cultural heritage and educational objectives. For instance, shall we remain content with an education which, at its best, transmits to the younger generations the accumulated culture and acquisitions of the past and tends to fix and predetermine habits of thought, belief and conduct by teaching children "the already known solutions of past and present problems", i.e. an education which places its greatest emphasis on passive assimilation and unquestioning conformity to what is given? Or, do we require an urgent re-interpretation of our educational philosophy and practice so as to develop creative intelligence and adaptive thinking in the students, giving them the will and the capacity to evaluate critically the existing institutions and social processes and to take part actively in that "continuous reconstruction of experience" which is the basis of all progress. These two different views of the function of education are by no means of merely theoretical interest. They express what is really a most fundamental educational issue of the age—for, on this choice depends, so far as conscious effort can control it, the future of our culture and civilization. In the past education has, usually, been organized as a process of indoctrination and assimilation. Often in the name of Religion and oftener still in the interest of the State or some

other super-personal entity, it has sought to repress—o least, to discourage—habits of free thinking and unbiase quiry. The English Public Schools, in spite of their va commendable features, offer an apt instance of how educ tended to crystallise individuality into a certain fixed pat dominated by tradition. In fact, generally speaking, in East as in the West, education has always allied itself stro with the existing socio-economic order and acted as a m of its preservation long after it had outlived its original ut If we look around and study the structure of Indian soc we will find that it is still dominated by relics of many c lete and obviously reactionary institutions—a semi-fe social order, a rigid caste system, communal cleavage inequitable distribution of economic opportunities and p leges, unsatisfactory status of women, a contempt for ma labour and labourers, and a divorce between individual ri and social obligations. Whatever justification may be off of some of these conceptions and institutions as express of an earlier social order and of education as a means for preservation—and personally I feel that such justificatic apt to be overdone—modern education will stultify itse it accepts, without question, this unjust, defective and ou date social order and regards its mechanical and uncri transmission as its main task. The insinuation into child experience of any social, political or economic doctrine such a way that they would be incapable later of thin critically about them will rob them of intellectual free and deny them the opportunity and capacity to think fr and fearlessly. In the totalitarian countries, education been frankly put into a strait-jacket and they have openly professed this aim and proceeded to realize it ruthless efficiency, producing individuals who think anc to order instead of functioning like free and creative responsible human beings. But, even in countries clai to be democratic, education has not been really free whatever freedom has been vouchsafed to it has often withdrawn, in a spirit of panic, whenever any real or all emergency has arisen. When schools normally deny to

children activities, opportunities and situations that stimulate fruitful and consecutive thinking, leading to free, intelligent and co-operative activity, they are falling into the same error, whatever their vocal professions may be. Their children will grow up not into independent and courageous human beings, able and willing to make their world over into a better world, but into timid conformists, anxious to choose the path of inglorious security. If we really believe that, while conserving and transmitting the best of the values which India has developed and cherished in the past, our education should also participate in the remaking and improvement of our ideas and institutions, we must develop a *critical and experimental attitude of mind* in the younger generation. Life, at its best, can never be regarded, in this age, as a mechanical routine, but as a creative art, and the capacity to think intelligently is not to be treated as a luxury for the few but as an imperative necessity for all who wish to lead full and normal lives.

This conception of education might arouse opposition on the plea that it will encourage teachers to become partisans and advocates of their own favourite social and economic theories and thus let in by the backdoor the very indoctrination which we have condemned. The answer to that criticism is twofold. Firstly, it is based on the naive assumption that the advocacy of traditionalism and the *status quo* is not partisanship but fairmindedness, while a progressive and forward outlook is unfair partiality! No intelligent person should be seriously taken in by this camouflage. Secondly, this view does not advocate the instilling of ready-made social and political creeds, whether 'radical' or 'reactionary', in the young; it merely demands for them protection from that premature crystallization of ideas which is induced at present by the total pull, conscious as well as unconscious, of the school and society. It is difficult, if not impossible, to shelter the child from the weight of social forces and ideas even when they are definitely recognized as de-educative. But it is certainly possible so to orient the work of the school that emphasis will be placed on active, personal thinking and independent action rather than a mechanical acceptance of ready-made

opinions. Modern educational practice, at its best—in Inc as elsewhere—is feeling its way towards a transformation schools into active, genuine and living communities whe shared activity and purposeful planning are carefully stim lated, and to the extent that we can guide our schools in tl direction we shall be forging them into instruments of soc progress. This is, to my mind, one of the most important arg ments in favour of educational ideas underlying such diver schemes as Basic Education, the Project Method or Peopl Colleges.

III

I started with the basic principle that any theory or syste of education which fails to take note of, and respond to, t most emphatic forces of the contemporary environment futile or reactionary. At best it can provide a mere smatte ing of superficial culture or give the youth a narrow traini for a few occupations and professions. It will never becor an effective instrument of social reconstruction or a mea of producing a better type of individual. Any attempt, the fore, to define the nature or the scope and functions of ec cation must constantly be referred back not only to directive Ideals and Purposes but also to the urgent dynam forces which are reshaping the pattern of society. I have far dealt with the larger implications of one of these forces modern science—and pointed out how it calls for a new tellectual orientation.

Let us now proceed to examine briefly what the imp of science has been on our life and what new problems of practical kind it has created for education. In the first plac Science has been applied, with almost ruthless efficiency, industry in the Western countries and, to a lesser extent, the East. This has resulted in large-scale production, whi has tended to make the world a single technological unit, a in the growth of new and amazingly rapid means of comm nication and transport—of goods as well as men and ideas which have, in their turn, brought about close economic a

intellectual interdependence between the peoples of the world, almost annihilating distance and time. But while, in this sense, the world *has* become 'one world', this fact has not begun to dominate our social, political and moral ideas or behaviour. We are still apt to think of our group relationships and national problems in terms that are so narrow and parochial as to be entirely unsuited to the conditions actually existing in the world. Bertrand Russell has described this tragic conflict between social facts and our mental and moral attitudes in his usual lucid manner: "Science has so altered our technique as to make the world one economic unit. But our political institutions and beliefs lag behind our technique and each nation makes itself artificially poor by economic isolation. We invent labour-saving devices and are troubled by unemployment. When we cannot sell our products we cut down wages under the impression, apparently, that the less men earn the more they will spend. All these evils arise from one source, that, while our technique demands co-operation of the whole human race as a single producing and consuming unit, our passions and our political beliefs persist in demanding competition."* Thus the crux of our dilemma lies in the fact that our material powers and resources have far outstripped the growth of our moral and social consciousness. In a world which is now organically one, powerful and influential groups and nations cling to the techniques and ideas of competitive individualism in social relationships and aggressive nationalism in politics; productive effort is very largely uncontrolled by social needs and purposes; the selfish 'profit motive' is accepted and encouraged in everyday economic and social life and society is generally divided into watertight compartments, based on race or religion or colour or class or economic status according to varying national idiosyncracies. Such a priceless collection of practical and psychological stupidities would be disastrous at any time; in our own age it is bound to prove suicidal unless something can be done to eradicate them.

This failure to appreciate the fact of human interdepen-

* Russell: *Education and the Social Order.*

dence, which had been long threatening to destroy the v foundations of modern civilization, plunged the world i two devastating wars in quick succession and it has n given birth to the great Atomic menace. It still makes natio cling to the traditions of absolute national sovereignty wh have lost all meaning; it sanctions patent social and econon injustices and denies to the greater part of mankind fi access to education and culture, thus keeping alive, witl the body-politic, a festering source of discontent and revolt a state of affairs which the new Technical Assistance P gramme of the United Nations Organization is trying, s somewhat timidly and gropingly, to improve. Thus, the soc order which we have built up has miserably failed to imp ment that promise of a fuller life for all, which science h seemed to hold out alluringly in the last century. But t failure, it must be stressed, is not that of science which h been as good as its word, laying at our feet all the riches the world and the plenitude of undreamt of power. T reason for the present *impasse* lies in the failure of man use his intelligence for creative rather than destructive en and to harness these new powers and resources to the serv of humane social and moral ends and the task of building a more just and decent social order. This conflict has creat a psychological situation which makes even the best of educative efforts futile. In our country, for example, whe Religion and Ethics have, in theory, always stressed the valu of unselfishness, justice, tolerance and co-operation a tended to subordinate material to spiritual values and son times even condemned the former altogether—in *this* countı we find the various channels of national activity, social, po tical and economic, increasingly dominated by motives of s fishness and exploitation. And education which should ha taken the lead in the reshaping of this social order, has be content to work as its subservient hand-maiden. That is wl it is impossible to bring about any radical changes throu education alone. Simultaneously, through the efforts workers in many fields, there should be a shift of empha in the forces and motives operating in our national life a

teachers should themselves be inspired by the vision of a new social order which would be more just, more progressive, more truly and innately co-operative and, consequently, more educative in its impact on youth.

Reference may be made, in passing, to another school of thought in our country which is inclined to reject the gifts of Science and Modern Industry as being dangerous and too closely associated with the terrible consequences which have followed industrial capitalism in the West. It would hearken back, if possible, to a more primitive social and economic organization in which such glaring injustices would not be possible at all and the loom of life would hum peacefully round small-scale industries and cottage crafts and occupations. There is considerable force in the considerations which have weighed with those who favour this viewpoint. But on a balance of all relevant factors, I am inclined to think that it is not only impracticable but is also a counsel of despair. In the first place, the world is too closely knit together today to allow any one country to put back the clock of time and reproduce the conditions of a different age. Secondly, the progress of humanity has come about, not by rejecting valuable and dynamic ideas and technical developments because they might prove or have proved dangerous, but by facing them boldly and working out their imperative social implications in such a way that their incidental disadvantages are transcended and they become effective instruments for the realization of worthy human purposes. The misery and suffering which have attended the development of Industrial civilization in the Western countries—I say *Industrial* and not Capitalistic advisedly because the two are not inseparably interlinked—are *not* necessarily an integral part of the system. They are primarily the product of human greed and human stupidity. And we, who come after the West in point of time in this evolution, should profit from their mistakes and protect ourselves from the maladjustments and exploitation to which they have given rise. That is certainly a challenge which we should accept, for we cannot, even if we will, avoid it by turning our faces backwards.

Let me now try to sum up somewhat sketchily what wou be the outstanding characteristics of this new Social Order it is to be the inspiration of our educational reconstructi(It should be a social order which would exploit in the full measure the resources and possibilities of modern scienti technology, and try to eliminate all avoidable poverty and i security which afflict mankind today and condemn a majori of men and women to a harassed striving for a miserable a insecure livelihood. If improved scientific skill and machin are wisely utilized to exploit natural resources and to redu human suffering, it will not only be possible to do away wi many of the evils of the present economic system but also provide for all that modicum of security and material comfc which is basic to the development of a full culture in whi all, and not merely the few, can share. The existing soci system stands irrevocably condemned because it keeps a lar majority of mankind in ignorance and poverty, denying them fullness of life, while securing to a small minority—a often an undeserving minority!—all the riches and the coı forts of a materially advanced civilization. Such a socio-ec nomic system cannot command our loyalty and allegiance teachers or inspire our highest educational endeavour. T social order, to which we can pledge our loyalty, must attem consciously to control the productive activities of scienti industry in the interests of society as a whole, must secu a real equality of opportunity for individuals and groups aı bring about a fairer distribution of the good of life, bo material and cultural. It should reject the claims of tl acquisitive instinct and incentive as the only powerful aı stable motive force of human conduct. I know that these aı the motives operating in the life of a majority of people but v should also realize that this is essentially an immoral aı pathological situation created by an unjust economic syster The educative significance of a better socio-economic ord lies in the fact—and this is a very significant fact—that, b securing to all the possibility of more 'abundant' life bo materially and culturally, the psychological emphasis will b shifted from the possessive and the egotistical to the creati

and the social motives which even today underlie and inspire higher scientific, artistic and moral effort. At present even those groups which enjoy immunity from economic want are obsessed by the possessive outlook because they realize that essentially their privileged position in society is undeserved and, therefore, precarious and open to attack. Under the circumstances, it should not be difficult to understand why higher motives of work cannot appeal to them. It is only in a society where equality of opportunity prevails and a sense of reasonable security from want is assured to all that the sublimation of motives and urges becomes possible through social and educative forces. Otherwise, as experience teaches us, the motives of fear, hatred, exploitation and revolt are too strong to be ousted from their entrenched position through the efforts of the school alone.

What part can our teachers play in the service of this social transformation, this stupendous task of creating a new and a better world? They are sometimes apt to feel depressed under the stress of their tiring work. Some of them must no doubt be thinking that, while their country is confronted with many difficult and bracing social and political problems, their own lives are being spent in the monotonous routine of teaching immature minds the elements of reading, writing, arithmetic and the like. When they think in these terms, I feel that they are missing the whole point and meaning of their vocation. Really, the present situation in our country contains within itself a challenge powerful enough to stimulate all the courage, intelligence, devotion and goodwill of which they are capable. Whatever may have been the position in in the past, under a foreign Government, there can be no doubt that, as Gandhiji had urged with great apostolic fervour in the last part of his life, the problem today is even more moral, educational and psychological than political or economic, and teachers—at *all* levels—have to play an even more significant part than politicians. While before 1947 we were fighting mainly for political freedom, we have to fight today for something infinitely more precious—the integrity, the decency and the salvation of our national soul. Teachers

should remember that, if they approach their work in t right spirit, bringing every aspect of their educational activi to bear on the object in view, they will be helping to bri about that psychological revolution in the minds and spir of their pupils which is a necessary condition for the emergen of a better social order. By exalting, in every field of schc work, co-operation above competition, creation above acqui tiveness, service above the lust for personal power and proi and active intelligence and inquiry above passive assimilati of secondhand opinions—by developing, in short, a free ai socially sensitive personality—they will not only enrich tl lives of their pupils as individuals but also train disciplin workers and leaders in the cause of that better social ord which should be the inspiration of all true workers in tl service of the country.

III

THE RELEASE OF THE CREATIVE IMPULSE

INDIA is faced, at this crucial point of its history, with tremendous problems of national reconstruction. These problems—social, political, economic and cultural—are individually very important. But in dealing with them there is always the danger which besets people who handle fragmentary phases of a situation—the danger, that is, of losing sight of the wood for the trees. It is necessary for the workers in various fields to realize that there is a certain unifying urge which should animate their diverse activities—the need for what may be called the 'Release of the Creative Impulse' in the men and women of the country. Under the stress partly of our pressing economic needs and partly of the currents of Western thought, we are apt to forget that the *highest* things in life are not the concerns of the flesh and the body and that 'man does not live by bread alone'. It is certainly right and proper for us to try and secure efficiency and bring happiness within the reach of every individual, but happiness does not consist *primarily* in the possession of a great quantity of goods, nor is efficiency to be measured by the speed with which we are able to turn them out. True happiness results from a feeling of harmony between the self and its environment—the inner environment of capacities and feelings and the outer environment of social and physical factors—and he alone is "efficient", i.e. makes a good job of his life, who finds in his work and vocation an opportunity for the joyous expression of his powers. This view demands a recovery of our faith in Man as the central figure in all our efforts and a realization that the highest and truest meaning of life is to be found in the pursuit of 'spiritual' values. It is a matter of personal faith

with me that this can only be achieved if we try to awak and release this Creative Impulse in the men and women, t children and adolescents of our country, and its free expr sion, individually and nationally, is made the inspiration our education. I am convinced that this Creative Impulse present in every individual, and it is the duty of all thinke social workers and educationists to devise ways and mea of releasing it for free expression.

I

Before proceeding to discuss the measures for the *Relea* of the Creative Impulse, it is necessary for us to recogni and appreciate the significant and central role which t Creative Impulse has played in the evolution of human l and institutions. The Theory of Evolution, as developed Darwin and his followers, exercised a profound influence the development of human thought and the philosophy human life. Before this great revolution came about, the mo prominent streaks of thought in European philosophy h come from the movement of German idealism. Its literatu its philosophy, its poetry took what might be called an idealis and spiritual view of life. It was based on faith in the infini dignity of Man and it was so preoccupied with fostering that Nature, in the words of Eucken,* "came to be regard merely as a background". Man was the centre of the worl stage, which, in its turn, was taken to be the centre of t Universe, and he was assumed to play an infinitely significa part in the drama of life. He was regarded as the master creation, different in kind from all other creatures, living a world designed specially for his use.

This self-complacent attitude has, however, been challen by the rapid and remarkable progress of Science during t last two hundred years and it has brought home to increasingly the sense of man's insignificance in the wi Universe. "Never," says Adler,† "has the Lilliputian dispar

* Eucken, *Problem of Human Life.*

† Adler, *Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal.*

etween man and the magnitude of his world, the immensities of space, come home with such crushing force as it has in our eneration." As the advance of scientific knowledge reveals o us the infinities of time and space, as with every improved elescope new worlds swim into our ken, and with new researches the panorama of the history of the Universe is nfolded to our imagination, our little span of life and the mall world in which we live seem to dwindle into insignicance.

This was the attack of the physical and mathematical ciences directed at the "quantitative significance", so to speak, f our life. A more alarming attack came from the side of the iological sciences which challenged the quality and the resumed uniqueness of man's place and destiny in the scheme f the Universe. The growth of Realism and the development f the Theory of Evolution seemed to strike at the root of he 'spiritual' view of the Universe cherished by the Idealists. he whole system of relationships between Man and Nature egan to be viewed in a different light. The old religious idea f development, which regarded the whole world as "the nfolding or unwrapping of the Divine Unity, as the temporal nanifestation of the Eternal Being",* could not be harmonized ith the facts which had been revealed about the evolution f the species. Nor was it possible to hold in peace the artistic onception of the world which regarded it as ever-growing rom within and attaining to more perfect self-expression, and hich had, in the hands of Goethe and his contemporaries, nvested the world with an invisible setting of spiritual forces. he new theory attributed the progress of the world and the rigin and growth of man—in fact, the whole development of rganic life—to 'the clash of elemental forces.' It eliminated ne operation of any self-conscious purpose and took what nust, in the ultimate analysis, be regarded as a mechanistic iew of life, in which human will could play no decisive part. he world was conceived of as a place full of constant struggle or existence amongst all the created forms of life in which pecies were tossed up and down according to some inexorable

* Eucken, *Problem of Human Life.*

law. Progress was ascribed to the perpetuation of such char variations as favoured survival and human life was look upon as shaped entirely by forces over which man had control. The general scientific attitude of the period v summed up by Adler rather cynically when he asked: there any valid reason for supposing that we are more wor while than our predecessors—insects, serpents, sheep and ox the carnivora? We do not claim for them any exalted posit in the scheme of things. They are products of Nature; so we. They have their noxious or kindly traits; so have They are waves of the flux; so are we. All our higher faculti our mentality and our morality are but the development instincts latent at the bottom of the scale of life; the high out-reachings and aspirations we cherish, so we are told, to be explained as out-croppings from below, no longer apprehension of what is supremely above".*

I have made this summary and somewhat unwarran incursion into the domain of Physical and Biological Scien with the due hesitation of a layman, in order to point that a conception of life and Universe which denies spiritual to the Universe, creativity to man and freedom to life stri at the very root of human ideals and achievements. We can achieve anything great or valuable in our life, either indi dually or collectively, if we subscribe to this view of mechanical Evolution. If life were nothing but an intric complex of physical and chemical relations, how can explain the emergence of those higher qualities in man wh distinguish him from all other creatures—the aesthetic, moral and the intellectual? We are reduced to the posit of regarding them, with James, as having no "biological utili and look upon Art, with Herbert Spencer, as an "epiphe menon", which has no significance in relation to the r business of life.

Luckily, later developments have modified and correc this undiluted view of Evolution and, amongst others, Berg and his school have given expression to the promising conc of *Creative* Evolution which has a direct bearing on

* Adler, *Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal.*

problem. Bergson holds that Evolution is neither a fixed nor a predetermined product. It is essentially and unceasingly creative. The Universe is not a 'completed system of reality', not a 'being', but a constant 'becoming'. There is a tremendous urge pulsating throughout the Universe, working along different lines of evolution, finding itself here and there in blind alleys but, because of its intrinsically creative nature, always overcoming obstacles of automatism, till in man it has achieved its highest known triumph. In Bergson's own picturesque and beautiful words,* "From one point of view, life appears in its entirety, as an immense wave which, starting from a centre, spreads outward and which, on the whole of its circumference, is stopped and converted into oscillations. At one single point, the obstacle has been forced—the impulsion has passed freely. It is this freedom which the human form registers." Elsewhere, he explains the triumph of the creative spirit in man in these picturesque words: "Our brain, our society and our language are only the external and various signs of the same internal superiority. They tell, each in its own manner, the unique exceptional success which life has won at a given moment of its evolution. . . . They let us guess that, while at the end of the vast springboard from which life has taken its leap, all the others have stepped down, finding the chord stretched too high, man alone has cleared the obstacle."*

Thus, as we notice in our own personal experience, not only does man grow like plants and move like animals and share their instincts and emotions but the impetus of life, ever pushing, ever springing forward, has also developed in him the power of the intellect, the gift of intuition and the capacity to roam free and unchecked in the regions of thought and imagination. Through the invention of motor mechanisms and the development of language and social life he has immensely increased the scope of his creative activity and his sphere of freedom. Instinctive activity rose to a higher plane of endeavour when the developed intellect of man began to take a

* *Creative Evolution.*

hand in the guidance of his conduct. "Instead of allowing a full paradise of perfection to continue its tame and timid rule of faultless regularity," says Tagore,* "the spirit of Life boldly declared for a further freedom and decided to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. . . . She took a bold step in throwing open her gates to a dangerously explosive factor which she had incautiously introduced into her council—the element of Mind." This view of life, which Bergson has developed in his epoch-making work, shows that its creative forces are ever making for more freedom and variety and tending to overcome the opposing forces of automatism. Evolution there certainly is—but it is not blind; it is purposive, tending to work out an ever more progressive and perfect type of life.

What then if, mathematically, the earth is an infinitesimal speck of space and man's life an infinitesimal moment of time? Through his power of creation, man emerges as a conqueror placed above the limitations of space and time and a co-worker with God in shaping the Universe and his own life into a thing of power and beauty. And in this creativity lies embedded the great possibility of the development of a more perfect type of personality. Poet Iqbal has repeatedly expressed his faith in the ultimate triumph of the Creative Evolution. I cannot do better than quote a few of his beautiful verses:

> Do not despair of this handful of dust—
> This light so distracted, so transitory;
> When Nature fashions some form,
> She brings it to perfection in the cycle of Time.

And again:

> Do not imagine that the work of the tavern-keeper has come to its appointed end;
> In the veins of the vine, there are a thousand untasted, unsuspected wines.

* *Religion of Man* (Hibbert Lectures, 1930).

In another poem, he expresses the attitude of the poet in whom creativity and art find their noblest expression and in whom we see a vivid manifestation of the creative nature of human Evolution, its ceaseless quest for beauty, for better and more expressive forms.

"What shall I do? My nature does not take kindly to rest,
I have an inconsolable heart like the breeze in the poppy fields;
Whenever my vision lights over a lovely form
The heart yearns for one lovelier still:
In the spark I look for the star, in the star for the sun—
I have no thought of a goal, for rest to me spells death!
I seek the end of that which is without end
With an insatiable eye and a longing heart."

Thus we see that the essential and distinctive characteristic of human activity is *no* mechanical repetition of set patterns of conduct, altered occasionally through the fortunate perpetuation of chance variations. It is a capacity for creative action. The creativity which modern thought postulates for the process of evolution is mirrored most clearly in the actions of man. There is in every individual an *"elan vital"*, a vital urge which is continually leading him to express himself in ways which are individual and unique to him. It is not possible to secure the full development of individuality and its latent capacities unless we allow this vital, creative urge to express itself through suitable channels. In the words of Dr. Nunn, the well-known English educationist, "Higher creative life, far from being an accident, is the clearest and purest expression of the essential characteristic of life at all its points and levels. All life, however humdrum, is permeated by the self-same element whose inflorescence is literature, art, philosophy, science and religion".* They all represent the triumph and achievements of the creative human spirit, struggling towards more truth, more beauty, more goodness, more light. Thus we can see how the Arts and Sciences, which had been denied

* Nunn: *Education—Its Data and First Principles.*

"zoological utility" and right of entrance, as it were, into the essential scheme of human life, come into their own as its most significant and distinctive elements. "Is he who creates like unto him that does not?" asks the Holy Quran, and the answer is a decided "No". Thus mankind, as a whole, is superior to other created forms in that it has a more highly developed creative impulse and the superiority of one individual or a community over another is to be measured by the same criterion, i.e. the degree to which the creative impulse of the individual or the community has been released and has succeeded in expressing itself in appropriate forms.

II

Let us turn now to the more practical aspect of the problem. Granted that the creative impulse is a distinctive characteristic and a valuable possession of man, how is it possible to nurture it and release it so that the individual may realize his highest possibilities? Perhaps, before answering this question, it would be better to raise and consider another. Is it correct, and does it accord with our everyday observation, to imply that this creative impulse is to be found in *all* individuals? Do we not see that there are innumerable men and women who never taste the joy of creative activity, whose life is one unbroken routine of monotonous tasks—persons in whom the creative impulse does not seem to exist at all? It is true that the majority of people in the world of today are unluckily denied the opportunities for creative self-expression, but does it warrant the conclusion that they have been denied this gift of Nature? No! The fault lies mainly with the environment which is so cramped and hostile that it denies to a majority of people the conditions for creative activity even as it denies them sound health and culture and thus debars them from rising to their full stature. Again, it is true that everyone has not the capacity to become a great painter or a great poet or a great carpenter. But the ways in which the creative impulse expresses itself are innumerable and there are great differences in its intensity and significance amongst different individuals.

Except in the case of those in whom some congenital mental or physical defect has cramped normal development, the creative impulse is the possession of all, not the privilege of a few, and—given the right conditions—it will certainly develop and manifest itself within its own special field and limitations. In one it may take the form of art; in another, of some craft; a third may give it expression and find satisfaction in deeds of social service. And who knows but that the seemingly mute individual who is not for the moment expressing himself in any visible form may be building up creatively a personality of intrinsic value. For, the ultimate reason of human life, as Bergson suggests, is "the creation of the self by the self, the continual enrichment of personality by elements which it does not draw from outside but causes to spring from within."

This ceaseless quest and creative yearning is given to every individual in a certain measure and the greatest tragedy in life is its suppression by adverse circumstances. The mute, inglorious Miltons, of whom the poet spoke, are people in whom lack of opportunity has killed the capacity for creative self-expression in the form of poetry. And even if their poetry had not been of much value to the world, there is no doubt that the release of the poetic impulse would have been a great boon to their own selves and enriched their personality considerably.

I am convinced that the greatest educational problem before our age is this release of the creative impulse in individuals as well as groups. It is threatened by the modern industrial and machine economy which tends to mechanize life, reducing men to mere appendages of the machines that they operate. In the picturesque words of Tagore,* "Such an intemperate overgrowth of things, like rank vegetation in the tropics, creates confinement for man. The nest is simple; it has an early relationship with the sky; the cage is complex and costly; it is too much itself, excommunicated from whatever lies outside. And man is building his cage, fast developing his parasitism on the monster Thing, which he allows to envelop

* *Religion of Man.*

him on all sides. He is always occupied in adapting hi to its dead angularities, limits himself to its limitations merely becomes a part of it".

Against this state of things the best minds of the East the West alike have experienced a sharp reaction and are anxious to eradicate the evil effects of this tend through educational and social reorganization. All the m ments associated with what is generally known as the ' Education" in the West are directed at bringing the j creative activity within the reach of the ordinary child the ordinary citizen who are being literally smothere present by their unfavourable environment.

Although in India industrialization has not proceeded s as in the West, the history of the last two hundred yea a tragic story of how the creative impulse has been stran in many spheres of national life. The ancient as well as medieval periods of Indian history were rich in cre masterpieces and throughout we find evidence of the ric and most fruitful creative activity. Whatever faults we be inclined to find with these periods on economic or s grounds, we must look back with admiration, perhaps envy, to those glorious days when the creative and aesth faculties of the people found expression in such masterpi as the great Temples of South India or the Taj and o architectural triumphs culminating in the reign of S Jahan, when artists and craftsmen and architects could " like Titans and finish like jewellers", when their remark sense of symmetry and intricate design could produce marvellous balance expressed in the minarets of the D mosque and work out the beautiful and incredibly proportioned writing on the Saracenic arches and the in mosaic of precious stones in the Taj. Not only did they ach great things in architecture, in poetry and in other fine a but the creative spirit sought avenues for itself in all the cr and industries as well. One can visualize the happy crafts achieving creative self-expression in Dacca muslin, in emb dery, in leather, in metals, in ornaments, in gardens, and all other materials in which they worked. This is not the p

to discuss the complicated chain of causes which combined to thwart and suppress this creative expression of national life and killed the flourishing arts and crafts, so typical of the Indian genius. The decline has not been confined to the arts and crafts only—it has manifested itself in the literature and literary activities of the people and their intellectual achievements. We hear complaints on all sides that the standard of intellectual output in India is low, that it has failed in modern times to contribute its full share to the advancement of science and other domains of knowledge. The reason is that our educational system as well as our social and political conditions have fettered the development of the creative capacity of our people. Education has been designedly given, till recently, with a narrow utilitarian aim and naturally it fails to challenge and evoke the higher powers whether of artistic creation or intellect or personality. The capacity for intelligent thought, for initiative and ingenuity, for the expression of what is unique in the individual self is atrophied for want of development and use. Similarly, the socio-political set-up of our life has had an adverse reaction on it. The denial of political liberty from which we suffered so long had not merely a political significance—it had far-reaching repercussions on all aspects of national life and led to the drying up of the springs of creative energy. A nation that is not free to develop its life and institutions in the light of its own special genius cannot rise to its full intellectual and moral stature. It lacks the atmosphere of freedom and responsibility which is an essential condition for growth. A great deal of the psychological unrest and unhappiness that we find today is due not exclusively to material deprivations but results also from the blocking up of the creative impulse in individuals and groups. Wherever an individual or a nation is bowed down with the oppressive feeling that it cannot give free expression to the best of its powers and aspirations, it suffers from spiritual suffocation. There is, of course, such a thing as 'possessive' happiness to which many people cling with pathetic tenacity and in which they find their satisfaction—the only satisfaction they deserve! But men gifted with a higher

vision and understanding outgrow its appeal and seel self-fulfilment in the pursuit of "creative happiness", w elements of quest and danger and joyous adventure. It be the aim and endeavour of all true education to human life by making individuals savour, and strive fo creative happiness.

III

"The urge to create is one with the urge for self-: sion. . . . It is the impelling desire to translate an expe a fleeting inner image into an outward form, to l significant personal impress upon material, to convey a or refine a feeling that has been lived before only in nation. . . . The criterion of the creative act is that i be the artist's own original and completely integrated po of what is in his own imagination." Thus wrote Pr Rugg, an American educationist, in a book of consic interest on New Education.* My purpose now is to e: under what conditions this creative activity, typical artist but present in greater or lesser measure in nourished and favoured.

It is a matter of common knowledge and experien creation cannot be *forced*. It is only when the spri creative activity have been released from within that th of the artist or the craftsman, struggling to express it obedience to the demands of his inner nature, see material and external outlets and submits itself cheerf the rules and restraints of technique. But this releas within can only come when the individual is living environment rich in experiences and is storing up his i sions and emotions to weave the texture of his inn Precious liquid may flow only out of a full vessel; an vessel has nothing to give. If the individual opens hi and heart to the things around him and lets the outsid feed his soul, he gathers up abundant material for h growth and he can use it for the exercise of his own c

* Rugg and Schumaker: *Child-Centred School.*

power. A German youth is reported to have asked Goethe, "How did you begin to write in such a beautiful style?" Goethe replied, compressing his valuable experience into half a dozen words, "I let things work upon me". What is true of Goethe is true also in some measure of every child and every student who is a potential artist. In the zealous advocacy of 'activity' in the new schools, there is certainly the danger of rushing and over-doing things, of not letting life and experience work slowly and silently on the scholars. "Conceivably," says Alexander,* discussing this remark of Goethe, "an individual may be so continually and zealously active that he never 'lets things work' upon him. According to this interpretation, educational activity must not be thought of as 'active' in the obvious sense only. Educative activity may be going on just as truly in the youth who lies on a green hill in the spring sunlight lost in day-dreams as in the pupil busy with his school task." Creative activity postulates an environment rich in stimuli for self-expression, leading to interested observation and the translation of a full and happy life of emotions and experiences into visible forms. A child or an adult, living in a poor, barren environment, whether in the school or at home, where the beauty and splendour of natural phenomena, the give-and-take of social life, the cultural influence of books and pictures and contact with the great minds of the past and the present, are wanting—such an individual will rarely have anything worthwhile to express. Nor is a nation or a community, which has not passed through any travail of the spirit or been brought into quickening contact with freedom, likely to produce beautiful poetry or art or music. From the educational point of view, therefore, the central problem is to ensure that a free, creative spirit permeates and penetrates all phases of school life.

We should also bear in mind that this creative spirit cannot feed on anything except those strands or currents which embody the most genuine traditions of national culture—currents which, in the words of Professor Nunn,† "are richest

* Alexander and Parker: *The New Education in the German Republic.*

† The Education of the People: An Address to the British Association.

in the creative element and themselves represent traditions of activity—practical, intellectual, aesthetic, moral—with a high degree of individuality and continuity and mark out the main lines in the development of the human spirit—national poetry, music, art, architecture, science and philosophy". Education is certainly a 'conversation with the world', but it must be 'carried out in the native idiom'. A nation which has to depend on a foreign language for self-expression is likely to remain intellectually poor and the chances of the release of its creative impulse are limited. Not that the mastery of foreign languages is an asset to be despised. But if it takes the place of an intimate understanding and use of one's mother tongue, it is a tragic handicap. The development of the folk spirit, which has always accompanied every great cultural renaissance, demands that our education should nurture in the people a deep and abiding love of our languages, our literatures and our arts. For, they represent "the great movements of the human spirit, the major forms in which the creative impulses of men have been shaped and disciplined". If we accept the theory of the school curriculum and activities which is implied in this idea, how poor and barren is the intellectual and cultural sustenance which we provide for children in our schools!

Let me illustrate what I mean by the value of a rich environment and how genuine personal experience lies at the back of all creative self-expression. Ordinarily, the routine-bound teacher regards writing as a formal skill to be acquired through a "disciplinary" technique. It is not for the child a dearly welcome opportunity to express himself about things he has done or seen or admired, not a sharing—through the written word—of rich, vital experience whose communication seems worthwhile to him. It is rather a soul-killing practice at the "mechanics of penmanship, correct usage of grammatical forms, punctuation, sentence structure and paragraphing", because on some distant future day these things will be needed by him as a scribe! It is *technique* dominating the release of the creative vision—the 'pruning hook' being employed rather than the 'watering pot' and employed far too early. The

result is an early, unconscious inhibition against naturalness and spontaneity in writing. Professor Rugg points out in his book to which I have already referred: "Unless the child has had freedom to think independently, to say what is in his thoughts, he is not likely to be transformed into a self-impelling creative individual when confronted by sheets of paper and a pencil. For, writing is thinking on paper and thinking is forming associations between previously unrelated experiences. In an atmosphere requiring conformity and submission, experience is limited to set patterns. Original thinking is discouraged; self-confidence is sacrificed to the need for following directions."

The result of school work carried out under these conditions is only too familiar to us. Neither the students in schools, nor a large majority of "educated" persons acquire even ordinary facility of expression—to say nothing of felicity of phrase—which one may reasonably expect of people who have been learning and practising the art of writing for years. The early emphasis on the formal and mechanical aspect and the barrenness of their everyday life, which cannot possibly stimulate self-expression, kill all impulse to creation, and the child—with his delightful and expressive prattle, so akin to poetry—develops into the tongue-tied youth and, in due course, into the adult with a harsh, uncouth style of speech and writing. The same thing applies to reading and the appreciation of beautiful writing. The child craves for beautiful sound effects and words which would conjure up images pregnant with beauty, because these have an intuitive appeal for him. Instead we give him for years nothing but uninteresting, poorly produced "Readers" through which he painfully spells his way, without coming into contact with really beautiful literature or the masterpieces of great writers. Tagore gives us a very interesting reminiscence of his early age to illustrate this point. "I still remember," he says,* "the day in my childhood when I was made to struggle across my lesson in a first primer, strewn with isolated words smothered under the burden of spelling. The morning hour appeared to me

* *Religion of Man* (Hibbert Lectures, 1930).

like a once illumined page, grown dusty and faded, discoloured into irrelevant marks, smudges and gaps, wearisome in its moth-eaten meaninglessness. Suddenly I came to a rhymed sentence of combined words which may be translated thus, 'It rains, the leaves tremble.' At once I came to a world wherein I recovered my full meaning. My mind touched the creative realm of expression and at the moment I was no longer a mere student with his mind muffled by spelling lessons, enclosed by classrooms. The rhythmic picture of the tremulous leaves beaten by the rain opened before my mind the world which does not merely convey information but a harmony with my being."

It will be idle to pretend that a chance phrase like this will arouse in every child the same depth of appreciation as it stirred in the poet-to-be. But wherever, under the impetus of the New Education, an attempt has been made to enrich the life of children with vital experiences gathered in freedom and joy, the result has been a deeper appreciation of beauty and its creative expression in one form or another. Some schools have discovered in their children a gift of poetic talent which the traditional schoolmaster would find hard to believe. And even more significant than the intrinsic merit of the poetry and prose produced by fairly young students is the influence which this release of creative effort exercises on the unfolding of their own personalities and in tapping the latent reserves of artistic emotions and appreciation. The *process* involved is more important than the products of their creative activity, because it leaves a most valuable impress on their mental and emotional disposition. Many years ago, in the University school at Aligarh, I tried an experiment in creative writing with boys of the 7th class, giving them freedom to choose their own topics and method of treatment and providing no help beyond reading out a good composition of the type proposed. They were asked to write the 'autobiography' of any selected article *without revealing its name*. The compositions turned out were a revelation to me of what young boys can do in the way of picturesque description and humorous treatment—many of whom would have normally sat sucking their pens

when asked to write formal "essays" of the classroom type. A study of these compositions showed how, under proper conditions, the creative impulse that has been lying dormant may be awakened into activity. In many Western schools, wherever the teaching of the mother tongue has been entrusted to some teacher of vision and insight, children have produced even poetry of a fairly high order. I quote at the end of this chapter one such poem given by Ernest Young in his delightful book, *The New Era in Education*, as an illustration of what he calls "Transmutation"—the intimate correlation of poetry, music and painting. It is but one instance out of many that have been published within recent years. In poems like these, important because of the promise that they hold out, important because they renew our faith in the creativity of the human mind, we can sense the triumph of the creative spirit over the forces which are tending to mechanize life. The fine flowering of the creative spirit, revealed in the international competitions in writing and painting sponsored by *Shankar's Weekly*, provide convincing evidence of this gift in the children of the world. The schools can surely render a great service if they try to foster with love and care this flickering art-impulse in every individual, so that the higher impulses to creation may have a chance to survive and express themselves freely.

IV

A free and healthy environment, rich in experiences and activity, being provided, our next problem is to inquire: How does the creative impulse, emerging in its nebulous, indefinite form, pass through the various successive stages towards completion and become the vehicle of an individual's self-expression? It is a big question and I feel considerable hesitation in dealing with it because I cannot claim to have any personal experience of artistic production in the usual sense. An outsider, who presumes to analyse the growth of the creative impulse, should always do so with a sense of diffidence and subject to the criticism and correction of those

who, as artists, have themselves known and experienced w
he is trying to discuss. By way of a starting point, I
take the psychology of the 'creative act' as given by Profe
Rugg,* who has described the various successive steps of
creative process as follows:

(1) There is, to begin with, the urge to create—hazy
intangible at first, often manifesting itself as a va
restlessness.

(2) Then there is the illuminating flash of insight,
intuition which suddenly reveals to the artist a
ception, perhaps indefinite, of the meaning tow
which he is groping.

(3) Thirdly, the translation of this vision into the vi
symbols of the art practised—it may be poetry, paint
music or anything else—which needs a mastery of
necessary technique.

(4) Then comes the educative effort, "the long, gruel
enterprise of the creative process itself, the tenaci
grip on the clearing vision of the completed prod
the persistent application of the necessary techniq
in shaping and reshaping the work as it develops,
successive stages of ruthless self-criticism . . . the
sistence upon unsparing exactitude, precision,
constant polishing and changing. . . . "

(5) Finally, when the whole process has been compl
and culminates in beautiful expression, it gives a s
of achievement and of joy which, in the word
Bergson, "is the seal which nature sets on every c
pleted, creative act".

Let us examine these steps in the creative process.
true that the urge to create, in its intense and unmixed fo
is felt by the born artist who expresses himself even v
hemmed in by adverse circumstances. But, as I have alre
said, every normal individual has the creative impulse t
smaller or greater degree, and numerous are the form

* *Child-Centred School.*

which it may express itself and find satisfaction. For such persons the expression of the creative impulse is greatly facilitated by an environment rich in gracious and fine expressions of national tradition and culture. A school—or a University—is a vital and life-giving environment to the extent that it brings into the life of its students an abiding love and appreciation for all that is best and most significant in national and human life. Then alone will it give rise to that 'vague restlessness', that 'desire to create' which is the motive force of all great and spontaneous achievements. This is not a plea for a *luxurious* environment but for one that will provoke, challenge and inspire varied activity through the stimuli which it provides. I would like to put in a plea for a concerted attempt, on the part of all concerned, to bring about some aesthetic improvement in the dull, drab and ugly environment which most of our educational institutions provide. There is no spaciousness, no grace, no beauty, no artistic appeal in the buildings, the furniture, the equipment or the grounds and the general lay-out of our schools and colleges and, therefore, it is only natural that our young men and women, coming from homes which also are artistically barren, should remain unquickened aesthetically. I know of the financial limitations under which most of our institutions labour but it is not entirely a matter of money—it is also as much the result of poor taste and lack of artistic imagination or just indifference to this aspect of education. Nothing can educate the creative impulse better than putting the children —or, for the matter of that, grown-up people—into vital *rapport* with an artistic environment and then letting them interact with it freely in an atmosphere of freedom and spontaneity. For, is not the creative "release" rather the release of the "imprisoned splendour" within than putting something in from without? Everything that tends to stereotype and mould activity into set patterns hinders growth and creation and limits our free activity. Freedom may be a moot point in philosophy; but from this point of view, we are essentially free when 'our acts spring from our whole personality, when they express that personality'.

Of the inner vision or 'intuition' of the artist, a great could be said, but I shall confine myself to one point or Intuitive insight is not something confined to the great mysl alone, as some people imagine; nor is it the exclusive of the artist and the poet. It is given in some measure all persons and, though it is little utilized at present, it possible to make much better use of it in education. It certainly present in children who, in many ways, resemble artist in their outlook and approach, and often perceive ma things intuitively long before they can grasp them intell tually. How does this intuitive flash come to the artist—flash of insight that reveals, as in a blinding blaze of lig a truth or a form or a course of action towards which he been groping? It is a problem so little explored—and by nature so difficult to explore—that no definite answer can given. But it does certainly require a very close sympathetic contact with Nature, an entering into the life things by an identification of the Self with what is sought. is not a comprehension of phenomena in the cold, clear li of reason, through intellectual analysis, but an apprehensi in which love and sympathy and emotional appreciation p their part. In one of his Persian poems, Iqbal makes out t significant point:

"Wilt thou learn the secret of life?
Sever thyself not from the flame like a spark.
Bring nought to the service of thy vision
but the discerning eye
Live not like a stranger in the world that
environs thee."

There are circumstances in modern life which undoubte make the functioning of Intuition very difficult. Intuiti activity is born in an atmosphere which permits of leisure a quiet, which is not dominated by that rush and hurry, th mad chase after doing things and amusing oneself wh preclude communion with the Self and with Nature and lea no room for silence and contemplation. I do not mean th

intuition comes only to those who lead a life of contemplation, divorced from action, but I do believe that in schools, as in the world outside, no one should be deprived of occasional chances to come face to face, as it were, with one's own self. One great virtue of the earlier educational system in India was its comparative leisureliness, its desire to bring the students into intimate and peaceful contact with Nature and to afford them time for self-contemplation so that they might discover the springs of the inner life in themselves. Such leisure is helpful and significant for creation for, as Tagore puts it: "Above the din and scramble, rises the voice of the angel of surplus, of leisure, of detachment from the compelling claim of physical need, saying to men 'Rejoice'. From his original serfdom as a *creature,* Man takes his rightful seat as a *creator;* whereas before, his incessant appeal has been *to get,* now at last the call comes to him *to give.* . . . . As an animal he is still dependent on Nature; as a Man he is a sovereign who builds his world and rules it."

On the place of technique in the working of the creative impulse there is a clear cleavage of opinion between the older and modern views. The older school of thought, which included all the 'disciplinarians', believed in the introduction of technique as early as possible. In fact, they often tried to give children, in ordinary as well as in art schools, a mastery of technical tools and processes before giving them any chance to come face to face with the inspiration of a creative conception. The modern school, on the other hand, believes that technique is not some kind of formal skill which can be acquired through formal exercises—it is rather the form which the creative impulse imposes on itself to gain greater expressiveness. It frees the child as well as the artist for greater effort, brings his work into relationship with that of others and gives him an ever-increasing sense of achievement. It is essential, therefore, that in the early stages of art teaching—and here I am using 'art' in the widest sense, including both writing and drawing—we should first let children express themselves unhindered and, when the springs of creative energy have been released, we can begin to think of ways and

means of directing this energy into disciplined forms. Premature insistence on technique, say in writing, can produce only that formal and lifeless style of expression which is so evident, for example, in the "compositions" of our students, and it tends to curb sincerity and naturalness which are the hallmark of all genuine creative work.

The "long educative effort" which requires persistence and ruthless self-criticism is essential, because, without it, the artist can never improve and rise to the full height of his possibilities. Many aspiring artists and gifted children fail to bend and harness their best capacities and will-power to the task in hand and hence fail to fulfil their promise. But if genuine interest has been awakened and command over technique is progressively acquired, the imperious call to create and carry the activity to its natural end will keep the budding artist absorbed in his work, exact a high standard from him and compel him to spurn easy success and resist distractions. The path of the artist, whether the child in the school or the adult, is not the primrose path of pleasure and relaxation—it demands his loyal and undivided devotion and his fullest effort which it is the business of the school to foster. The joy that creative activity yields is not of the nature of amusement; it is rather the joy of strenuous effort, of obstacles faced and overcome and of the spirit of adventure and enterprise which expresses itself in the reduction of obstinate matter to beautiful form.

A few words may be added on one last aspect of creative activity which, to some extent, is within the power of most individuals—Appreciation. The word recalls to my mind a motto which I saw prominently displayed in the Art Room of a progressive English school: "No Appreciation without Creation". It sums up aptly a fundamental principle of all Appreciation. It is wrong to imagine that Appreciation is a passive process. It is really an active and richly creative process. Critical appreciation is as much a creative act as poetry or music, because no one can truly evaluate and genuinely enjoy a beautiful poem or a masterpiece of painting or sculpture unless, by his sympathetic imagination and the creative activity of his mind and feelings, he can enter into

the life of the subject and identify himself with the mental and emotional states of the artist. Appreciation of the beautiful —in art and literature and life generally—is one of the purest and highest sources of pleasure and it has to be definitely and progressively cultivated. It is one of the major tragedies of our education that it sends out students who hold degrees and who may also have a hazy memory of many disjointed facts but to whom the gift of creative appreciation of beauty is denied. Not for them is "a thing of beauty a joy for ever". In the pilgrimage of life they may come across many such things but they pass them by with closed eyes. Contact with the best that has been thought and felt by the great men of the past and transmuted into beautiful forms of art, progressive refinement of taste and standards of judgment and, at the same time, a scrupulous avoidance of the imposition of values from outside—all these are necessary for the cultivation of true appreciation. Really great art makes its own appeal direct to the child as to the adult. Teachers should not, therefore, allow their own personality to loom too large and interrupt the child's vision of beauty and his intuitive appreciation of what is of aesthetic value in it. It is really this power of intuitive sympathy which is at the basis of both creation and appreciation. What is it, asks Wildon Carr,* that we call genius in great painters and poets and musicians, and he goes on to explain: "It is the power they have of seeing more than we see and of enabling us by their expression to penetrate further into reality. What they see is there to be seen, but they alone see it because they are gifted with a higher power than we.... It is the power to enter by sympathy into their subject. Great art is inspiration; it is the artist's power of knowing by entering within the object and living its life. What makes the artist's picture? Not the colours which he mixes on his palette and transfers to his canvas—they are only his means of expression—not the model which sits to give him direction in his composition, nor the skill with which he portrays the reality in his representation. What makes the

* *Bergson and His Philosophy.*

picture is the artist's vision, his entry into the very life : his subject by sympathy. . . ." It is this sympathetic intuitior the privilege of the artist, which we have to develop in th students of our schools through the provision of a stimulatin environment and the right approach in teaching.

Let me sum up briefly the argument of this chapter. I hav tried to explain that the entire process of Evolution is creative process, that everything which strengthens and encou rages this creative element in the life of the individual no only furthers the process of Evolution but also gives us tha richness and fullness of life without which human existenc is apt to fall below its highest standard. The release of thi creative impulse is important alike for individuals and com munities, for without such release they are both likely to suffe from a sense of spiritual uneasiness and of the atrophy o their latent powers. It requires for its expression an environ ment in which freedom and joy and spontaneity prevail an there is room for leisure and silence and intimate contac with Nature. We must learn to look upon life itself as a work of Art which has to be shaped by the individual unde conditions which, on a superficial and piecemeal view, appea to be those of restraint and predetermination but really permi a large measure of autonomy to the individual to weave th texture of his life by his own free and creative activity. He does so on the basis of the raw materials he gets from Natur and the training which is imparted to him by the cultura influences of his environment. The ambition of every indivi dual should be to try and realize in his life something of th integral unity, the expressiveness, the triumphant freedom an balance which characterize great works of Art.

APPENDIX

The following poem quoted by Young in *The New Era in Education* was composed at the age of eighteen years by a student of a progressive school in England where the teacher of English literature had a living faith in the possibility of releasing the creative impulse in youth. The poem is inspired

by Roger Quilter's *A Study* and gives in the form of a poem the impression made on the boy as he listened to that musical theme.

At the top of waving trees
Swaying gentle as a bird,
Was born the sweetest little breeze
That ever stirred—
That ever was heard.

Rhythm nursed this baby breeze,
Whose woes and joys were harmonies,
Whose youth was full of melodies—
All sung to please
The God of Trees.

Passion one day tore the breeze,
Filled it with emotion strong;
Almost tore it from the trees
And for long
Filled its song.

While the passion rocked the breeze,
Rhythm ruled its wild endeavour,
To escape the guardian trees
And to sever
Them for ever.

The cry uplifted by the breeze,
Full of passionate despair
Reached at last the God of Trees
Who then and there
Answered the prayer.

Rest was granted to the breeze,
The Passion died in bearing Peace,
And in the tall, caressing trees
Praise for release
Did never cease.

Then death claimed the sweet-voiced breeze
Who, in sunset's dying rays,
Thus comforted the sighing breeze:
"Henceforth," God says,
"Silence is Praise!"

IV

EDUCATION FOR UNDERSTANDING*

THE GREAT national and international emergency under which we are meeting this year provides an appropriate opportunity to examine one of the basic issues of modern life—how can understanding amongst men be fostered through education? It is only an exceptionally short-sighted educationist who can afford to look upon this awful human cataclysm with indifference—such an educationist would regard *all* the pulsating problems of life as foreign to the province of his activity. *If* education is a creative activity that shapes the character of individuals and communities and is responsible for their behaviour and attitudes, educationists cannot, surely, regard with equanimity this sad spectacle of "what man has made of man". They must strive to produce more balanced, more sensitive, more socialized personalities in the children whom they are educating and release them from the repressions and phobias generated by an unsuitable system of education and an unjust social order. Nor can they afford to remain unconcerned about the "shape of things to come", about the social order that is to emerge out of the fiery crucible of the war. For, even the best planned educational effort, hemmed in by an uncongenial and adverse environment, is destined to prove futile. It is, therefore, only proper that educationists should put their heads together and, with courage and integrity, face the great educational issues confronting the country. There are some people of limited vision who are surprised at educational and cultural problems being discussed at such a critical time when the war has dwarfed every other

* From an Address at the Srinagar Session of the All-India Educational Conference.

issue into insignificance. But they forget that wars can h
no possible justification except when they are waged in
service of precisely these cultural issues and with the ob
of securing for people the possibility of carrying on tl
normal cultural and constructive pursuits in an atmospl
of peace. Cultural values may appear merely academic
remote to the hard-boiled materialist, but they are greate
significance than all the wars ever waged in the history
mankind, and it is the primary duty of educationists to gu
them with intelligence and devotion. That should be
aggressive rejoinder to those who would relegate crea
activities to the background at times of crises.

This year the Educational Conference is devoting it
specially to the discussion of an issue of outstanding imp
ance for the future of this country: Education for Unc
standing—Inter-Cultural and Inter-Communal. There is
problem in the field of Education in our country which
more significant and more pressing than that of evolving
educational pattern which would promote inter-communal
inter-cultural understanding. I have no doubt that we m
either solve this tangle or we would perish—perish spiritua
if not physically. It is not merely our political existence t
is at stake but the grace, the dignity and the decency wh
make life worth living, redeeming it from the level of m
brutish existence. I feel very strongly that, unless we
press all the forces of our national life into the service
bringing about a healthy and permanent understand
amongst the various cultural and communal groups inhabit
this great country—as Mahatma Gandhi taught us with wisd
and patience and courage—life would not be worth living
our educational effort would shatter itself against those d
forces of suspicion, hatred and misunderstanding which ar
the free expression of man's real humanity and turn his sp
into stone. This problem covers two closely related, but
identical, issues—namely, "Inter-Cultural Understandi
which is a world-wide problem and "Inter-Communal Unc
standing", which is an immediate problem that we have
face in our own country. So far as the first problem

concerned, it is important to realize that, on the whole we are essentially a tolerant people—tolerant of other cultures and ideas. It is true that political circumstances had created a certain amount of acute misunderstanding between the Indians and the British people—or rather against the British Government—and today there is considerable tension and ill-will between India and Pakistan. But there is reason to hope that just as Indo-British relations have improved since the attainment of Independence, in course of time, the misunderstandings between these neighbouring countries will also disappear and our relations will be friendly with all the nations in the world. There is something innately repugnant to the Indian genius in the attitude taken, for example, by the aggressive and racially intolerant Nazis about the superiority of the Aryan race or by the somewhat naive American assumption that they are God's chosen people superior to all other nations and races. Therefore, there is reason to hope that, so far as this particular issue is concerned, it will never become dangerously acute. But, in view of the closely knit economic and technical unity of the present world, Education cannot be content merely with the cultivation of a passive goodwill towards all the peoples; it must strive more consciously and systematically to create an active appreciation of ways of life and thought different from their own. In fact, it should be India's special privilege, now that she is free to play her destined role in the comity of nations, to lead the way towards a more active, a more generous and a more spontaneous appreciation of other forms of culture and other social systems. If I may repeat a well-worn truism, the tragedy of the present age is that its economic and scientific technique has outrun not only its political and social ideas and organization but also its ethical, emotional and intellectual capacity. While the advance of Science and Technology as well as ordinary common sense demand an international outlook, political systems are still aggressively nationalistic and the mind as well as the emotions of the people are cramped within narrow geographical loyalties. This is how the great Indian poet, Iqbal, has depicted the "dilemma of the modern man", beset by the glaring discrepancy

between his great achievements in the field of Science and the growth of his moral consciousness and outlook:

"The modern man, who has been able to trace the courses of the stars, has lost his way in the domain of his own thinking;
He has got so entangled in the web of his scientific achievements, that he is unable to distinguish between good and evil;
He has ensnared the rays of the Sun, but failed to illumine the darkness of his own life!"

I have always held the view that, if we wish to cultivate a breadth of outlook that will enable us to look beyond national boundaries, there is no justification for confining the teaching of History in our Secondary, or even Primary schools, to the study of Indian (and English) History, because that does not provide a sufficiently broad-based syllabus to enable growing children to get a vision of the world as a whole. In order to understand this process of evolution, it is as important to understand the significant outlines of the History of China or Japan or France or Russia or America as to study the history of the British people. It is only when the growing student is able to visualize something of the wide sweep of the entire human movement, when he can appreciate the part played by different nations and peoples in the enrichment of the common heritage of culture, that he can become a citizen of the world in the true sense. I would, therefore, suggest that the movement, which has been only recently started in our schools, to introduce world history should be strengthened and outstanding world events and trends, which are within the comprehension of the students at different stages of their education, should be included in their history syllabus.

Secondly, I feel that the study of life stories of great men of all ages and nationalities should be made an integral part of school work. The desired emotional reactions could be strengthened if special days could be set aside for celebrating the memory of great benefactors, men and women, of all ages

—reformers, inventors, doctors, social servants and political leaders who have striven for the good of mankind in their respective fields. If this were done intelligently, children would gradually realize that this great wealth of culture is not the result of the efforts made by one particular group but is the product of the joint endeavour of all races and nations. At higher stages of education an open-minded study of the cultures and literatures of other peoples and a living realization, through the study of Economics and Sociology, of the essential unity and inter-dependence of mankind would pave the way for a broad and tolerant outlook on world problems.

There is one weakness, however, in this position which we cannot afford to overlook. A good deal of the educational effort which we may devote to the development of Inter-Cultural Understanding would prove futile so long as political exploitation and economic injustices exist, *for one serious act of political injustice may undo the efforts of years of education in tolerance and goodwill.* This only shows that problems of reconstruction cannot be visualized in isolation but must be treated as a whole and that this is a field in which far-sighted statesmen should join hands with the educationists of vision in shaping a more just and rational world. Whatever is done, on the international plane, to raise the standard of life in backward areas and to end the exploitation of the weaker by the stronger nations would naturally strengthen the defences of Peace and Understanding.

Let me now turn to the second aspect of the problem, namely, Inter-Communal Understanding which is a matter of concern for us in this country. There is to my mind no greater duty before the true well-wishers of this country than to fight against all those forces which tend to create discord and bitterness in the hearts and minds of its citizens. Can there be a greater reason for national shame than the appalling fact that we, who are the inheritors of a great cultural and humanistic tradition, who have always prided ourselves on its mellow wisdom and its breadth of vision, who claim allegiance to religious systems based on peace and tolerance, should be steeped in an atmosphere of mutual distrust and

should make the differences in our religions, languages, and cultural traditions an excuse for fratricidal dissensions instead of using them as a means for the enrichment of our life and culture? When one surveys this communal situation, one is apt sometimes to be overwhelmed by a sense of futility and despair. I have often asked myself the question: What *is* the good of all our educational and political effort if we have not been able to establish fully the very first condition of civilized existence, i.e. the capacity to live together peacefully and amicably? But despair is not a normal mood for the active worker in behalf of worthy causes. As someone epigrammatically remarked: "Cassandra was a profound pessimist because she did nothing; she would not have been so if she had fought for Troy!" We, who strive for a better future for our country, cannot afford to let ourselves be paralysed by adverse circumstances. We should not forget that our educational system has not yet addressed itself, seriously and with all its potential resources, to the task of promoting inter-communal harmony and understanding. In the past, its aims have been narrowly selfish and individualistic; its methods have tended to exalt competitive success above co-operative endeavour; its curricula and text-books have actually hindered a proper appreciation of the cultural achievements and contributions of various groups.

Thus, in this matter, the educational trend in the recent past has been against our historical tradition which has, generally speaking, favoured fusion and the synthesis of varying cultures. During the last few decades, for example, mutual relations amongst different groups and communities have become so embittered that only a radical, comprehensive and uncompromising crusade against intolerance and stupidity on *all* fronts can produce any appreciable results. It is not possible for the educationists alone to bring about this great, psychological revolution; their efforts must be supplemented, as argued elsewhere in this book, by the creation of a just socio-economic order and the proper adjustment of political rights. The causes are so many and so interlinked that, while an attitude of facile optimism regarding the power of education will be

foolish, there is no reason why leadership in this field should not be assumed by teachers of all grades who exercise their personal influence over youth during the most impressionable years of their life. I would like all schools and colleges to face this problem boldly and think out effective and persistent ways of instilling in the students the spirit of genuine tolerance towards other communities and religions. On the intellectual side, they should be trained to be impartial, dispassionate, self critical, even more concerned about the mote in their own eyes than the beam in others', honestly and frankly critical of all excesses or injustices wherever they may exist. We are far too apt today to shut our eyes to our own faults and to throw the entire blame, in all controversies and mishaps, on others. This is neither intellectual sincerity nor moral courage, and an education which fails to instil these fundamental virtues stands condemned.

Some of the general considerations, which I have already urged in the field of inter-cultural understanding, will apply here also. The Hindus, Muslims and all other communities should learn—in schools and outside—to study with reverence and sympathy one another's distinctive cultural achievements and contributions and education should lay stress upon the large field of common interests, which unite them, rather than the comparatively smaller field, where differences are sown and dissensions are harvested. There is no doubt that the things which unite the various groups and communities in India are far more numerous and deeper than the things which divide them and, therefore, it is the business of the educationists to stress the significant rather than that which is less important. I am not, however, one of those who would either belittle unduly or ignore altogether, the cultural differences that do exist amongst different groups and communities—differences in beliefs, in economic ideology, in social customs—and these may sometimes be just as pronounced amongst groups professing the same faith as amongst those of different religious persuasions. But there is no reason to hold the pessimistic belief that differences in outlook or talents or capacities or in religious background spell disaster or make

national unity impossible. We must realize that this great culture which we have inherited is the result of the confluence of a number of cultural streams that have been pouring into it from different directions. Personally, I feel that no unity would be worth striving for if it did not emerge, like a beautifully patterned and harmonized flower, out of the soil of diversity. Enrichment in art or literature or social and cultural ideas is impossible if such genuine differences are not large-heartedly accepted and allowed to develop within a harmonious whole.

There is, however, one danger to which we should pay special attention—the tendency to what may be described as aggressive "revivalism", the attempt to revive the practices and reconstruct the social system of the ancient past when, say, the Aryans lived a life of simplicity and the later races like the Greeks, the Afghans, the Turks, the Mughals and the British had not come in to introduce complications into the simplicity of that socio-political system. This attempt to recreate a culture and an age that is past and gone beyond recall is nothing but obscurantism and, in its essence, anti-national and anti-progressive. We must all realize that the country in which we live belongs as much to the Hindus as to the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsis and the Christians, that its most priceless wealth is the common culture which centuries of joint endeavour have evolved and that it is their duty to bring about its further enrichment and development through co-operative effort. This 'revivalism' has gained a new power and lease of life on account of the bitterness engendered by the partition of the country. But while we can understand its psychology, there can be no justification for encouraging it, because it is not only apt to breed intolerance and narrow-mindedness but also arrest intellectual freedom and technical progress.

Looking at the problem psychologically, I have always felt that the only sound method of promoting understanding and goodwill among different groups and communities is to ensure that they come together more and more in a fellowship of co-operative effort and endeavour. It is only by working

together in the service of common purposes that men and women can gain that balance, that breadth of mind, that capacity for mutual tolerance and accommodation which is the distinguishing mark of civilized life. In our schools and colleges, we should try to create opportunities of service in which students—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and all others—could strive together in friendly fellowship and thus learn to understand one another better through the pursuit of common aims and objectives. Such contacts, if they are properly supervised, would result in removing many of the prejudices and misunderstandings whcih are nurtured in ignorance.

So far as the political question in India relates to the relationship of majority and minority communities, it is obvious that the duty of the majority community is to win the confidence of the minority by being fair, broadminded, generous and sincerely solicitous about their rights. The duty of the minority community, on the other hand, is to win an honoured place for itself in the life of the country by its service and sacrifices in the pursuit of common purposes. It should not ask for or expect special concessions—it is neither wise nor dignified. Its salvation lies in concentrating on efficiency, high standards of conduct and devotion to the common good. The biggest task of education today is to create this dynamic change in the intellectual and emotional attitudes of the rising generation; besides this, all other questions of téchnique and organization pale into insignificance. For, *this* is the crucial criterion which distinguishes the truly civilized, and humanized individual from one who lives by the law of the jungle and seeks to conquer his rights by trampling over his own duties and the rights of others.

I have described elsewhere a small but rather significant experiment which was tried in the schools of the Kashmir State for seven years under the Scheme of the "Labour Week" in schools. During this week, students belonging to different classes and religious groups worked shoulder to shoulder and the "twice-born" Pandit boy was not averse to cleaning the drains of the city side by side with his Harijan classmate.

Is it too much to hope that such contacts might produce a better, more appreciative, more tolerant and more civilized mentality than the one from which our own unfortunate generation has been suffering? We must, however, remember that no *one* particular aspect of school work can bring about far-reaching changes in the emotional and intellectual attitudes of our children. Neither religious instruction, nor the Labour Week, nor the reorganized teaching of History can by itself achieve this great objective. It is necessary to ensure that every aspect of the school work is permeated by such a spirit; that methods of teaching and discipline, the organization of the curriculum, the personal example of the teachers, and above all, that intangible "atmosphere" which distinguishes one school from another, all help in the creation of this mentality. It is the *cumulative* effect of all these various factors which can bring about a revolution in the deeper urges of a child's nature.

There is one other suggestion which has often occurred to me, though I have always felt a little doubtful about its reception by others, which I might share with you. In our country today, since the death of Mahatma Gandhi, in particular, there are not many individuals or groups which could be described as wedded, with singleness of purpose, to the advocacy of the unpopular cause of truth and justice and determined to exercise their innate right of fearless criticism against the members of their *own* particular group or community when it happens to be in the wrong. Have we not often noticed in recent decades that whenever there is any grievance, real or imaginary, for which a Hindu is supposed to be responsible, it brings on him the concentrated attack of the Muslim Press and public, while the Hindu Press and public often think it their duty to rally unthinkingly to his support? Likewise, if a Muslim is held to be responsible for a real or imaginary injustice against a Hindu, the same unlovely pattern of conduct is repeated—the Hindus would attack him even though he may be in the right, while the Muslims would feel called upon to defend him even though he may be obviously in the wrong. There are, no doubt,

many honourable exceptions but I do not think I am over-painting the picture. This is neither justice nor decency. No nation can survive which fails to produce some individuals or small groups to whom Truth and Justice are dearer than their lives and their special communal interests, and who are prepared to condemn impartially the excesses committed by members of *all* communities and groups. If we had amongst us, in all communities, groups of persons who are fearlessly resolved to stand for justice and speak the truth—particularly when it implies condemnation of excesses committed by their own group or community—would not their criticism be more graceful and effective than criticism coming from the members of another group or community? A Hindu leader or a Hindu paper censuring the excesses of a Hindu group and a Sikh leader, or a Sikh paper advocating the cause of a Hindu, if he has been rightly aggrieved, will exercise a powerful moral effect and tend to diminish the bitterness which characterises communal relations today. Short-sighted communalists have always characterized such an attitude as one of disloyalty to one's own community. It is, therefore, necessary to stress the fact that no loyalty is greater than one's loyalty to Truth and Justice and no community can flourish or achieve any spiritual, or even material greatness, on the foundations of untruth and injustice.

How can this principle be implemented in some manner in our schools? I would like to see the formation in all schools—and outside too—of common squads of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh youths who, in times of peace, would render social service to all classes and communities irrespective of religious differences and, in times of communal clashes and conflict, strive for peace and understanding and be prepared even to sacrifice their lives in resisting mob fury. I do not think many actual sacrifices will be called for, as I cannot imagine even a madly infuriated mob attacking indiscriminately a group of young men, recruited indistinguishably from all communities, who have won their confidence and esteem in the days of peace. And even if the worst came to the worst and a few lives were sacrificed, it will create such a sensation that the

sleeping conscience will be rudely awakened, and who knows but that the blood of a few such martyrs may become the seed of a new Church of Humanity in which it will be impossible for people to kill one another because they happen to address God under different names? Such a vision of humanity has come to all great Prophets and teachers of mankind—a vision in which reverence for man as man, for woman as woman, transcends all the differences, great and small, which divide mankind into groups and communities. Unless, through education and all other creative resources, we can inculcate this sense of respect for the human individuality, irrespective of its external trappings, we can never even begin to solve the difficult and obstinate conflicts which have embittered our individual and collective life.

V

EDUCATION AND THE CULTURAL CRISIS*

THIS Convention is meant to be a small, friendly discussion group of persons who are interested in education and culture and are anxious to preserve and consolidate the highest values of our national life and help in adjusting the national mind to the new demands and urges of the age. For, we are living not only in a new and dynamically changing India but a new world in which science, industrialism and new methods of warfare have completely reset the old problems. If we are unable to adapt ourselves to this new situation and solve these problems satisfactorily, we shall not be able to retain and consolidate our freedom or make any progress or contribute anything of value to the world.

In the period of our history that has just come to an end, we were in a state of political helplessness, and national policies were formulated by our British rulers. Its psychological result was the development of a state of mind which did not seriously concern itself with the shaping of the future and was content to let things take their course. There were many outstanding individual exceptions, no doubt, but the general attitude was one of scepticism about much good coming out of organized collective effort. Instead, we had the rather dubious satisfaction of being able to ascribe all ills to the fact of foreign domination. It was a peg on which people were apt to hang their own shortcomings and failures as well as the evil results of political subjection. With the attainment of freedom, this situation has been completely changed, and

* Welcome Address at the Convention on Cultural Unity in India held at Mahableshwar in 1949.

we must now take upon ourselves, fairly and squarely, the full responsibility for our successes as well as our failures. This obviously calls for a more objective, more critical and more exacting self-appraisal, both as individuals and as a people, and a more dynamic attitude towards the problems that beset us.

Now, in this world of power politics, where force and violence hold undisputed sway and the Atom Bomb seems to have become the final arbiter of the fate of the world, it may appear somewhat presumptuous for people like us—who have no more formidable weapon to wield than the pen and no missiles stronger than the spoken word to throw into the arena—to believe that we can arrest or divert the fateful current of events. I want, in all humility, to challenge that assumption and to put forward the proposition—which is very, very old, indeed, but has been elbowed out of the way in this age—that ideas are more powerful than armaments and that it is human thought, rather than any of its mechanical products, which must triumph ultimately in deciding human affairs. Many, many years ago, during the comparatively mild horrors of the First World War, the 'New Republic' of America had put this proposition in words which I would accept today without a change—

> "Who cares to paint a picture now, or to write any poetry or to search the meaning of language, or speculate about the constitution of matter? It seems like fiddling when Rome burns. Or to edit a magazine—to cover paper with ink, to care about hopes that have gone stale, to launch phrases that are lost in the uproar? What is the good now of thinking? What is a critic compared to a battalion of infantry? . . . Yet the fact remains that the final argument against cannon is ideas. The thoughts of men which seem so feeble are the only weapons they have against overwhelming force. It was a brain that conceived a gun, it was brains that organized the armies, it was the triumph of physics and chemistry that made possible the dreadnought. Men organized this superb destruction; they created this

force, thought it, dreamed it, planned it. It has got beyond their control. It has got into the service of hidden forces they do not understand. Men can master it only by clarifying their own will to end it, and making a civilization so thoroughly under their control that no machine can turn traitor to it. For while it takes as much skill to make a sword as a ploughshare, it takes a critical understanding of human values to prefer the ploughshare.... Knowing this, we cannot abandon the labour of thought. However crude and weak it may be, it is the only force that can pierce the accumulated passion and wrong-headedness of this disaster. We know how insecurely we have been living, how grudging, poor, mean, careless has been what we call civilization.... We shall not do better in the future by more stumbling and more panic. If our thought has been ineffective we shall not save ourselves by not thinking at all, for there is only one way to break the vicious circle of action, and that is by subjecting it endlessly to the most ruthless criticism of which we are capable.... The guilt for war comes home finally to all those who live carelessly, too lazy to think, too preoccupied to care, afraid to move, afraid to change, eager for a false peace, unwilling to pay the daily cost of sanity."

This is a statement which applies not only to America but to the whole world, including ourselves, and it is as true in 1951 as it was in 1919. If there is to be a reversal of values which have gained currency in the world and if the hearts and minds of our own people are to be cleansed of the many unlovely and uncongenial traits which have developed in recent decades, we must not only recognize our share of the responsibility for the present state of affairs, but also work actively for its betterment. We may or may not succeed—for, who can make advance conditions with life?—but, to the sincere worker, it is the labour in a good cause which is more important than the fruit. We should rid ourselves both of undue modesty and of pessimism and sense of frustration and use our minds and our influence in our own spheres of activity

to bring about a moral and psychological revolution w even more urgent and important than the political rev that we have passed through.

In making this concerted effort, we have one grea in our favour—the work, the memory and the guidin of Mahatma Gandhi. It is in no conventional spirit that a reference to his name. I do so because I believe that personality we find the truth of this situation mirrore brilliant clarity. He has played two great roles in our —distinct but inter-related. He struggled for the p liberation of the country—and what an epic struggle been, almost unparalleled in the annals of history!— was given to him to see the fruition of his efforts lifetime. This is by itself an achievement—the liberat forty crores of people!—which has won for him a pl honour in the corridors of history. But he was som much greater—a teacher, a reformer, the voice of message—a man as keenly interested in the inner p logical revolution as in the outer political revolution. I to him the political revolution was important precisely b it was a condition precedent for the social and moral r ration of his people. He knew that, without political fr India could not live, could not forge her destiny fre accordance with the *best* of her cultural and sp traditions. So he wanted them not only to be free but worthy of that freedom. In this second and greater ta success was more limited. He *did* succeed in keepir *political* fight free, to a remarkable degree, from bloodsh racial rancour. It is *not* a matter for surprise that there sometimes lapses from the high standard that he placed us. What *is* a matter for surprise is the fact that ther so little of it!

But, in the wider task of re-educating the people s and morally, Mahatma Gandhi's success—which was noticeable in many directions—was limited by two f During the fight for freedom, the attention of the peo general was focussed primarily on its *political* aspect; Gandhiji and a small and select circle of his close ass

who were constantly exercised about the problem of moral values. The bulk of the people were trained in political Satyagraha, in mass demonstrations, in breaking the laws and bravely accepting the consequences. Now, *these* are qualities which are very valuable in the storm and stress of a political struggle; they are of secondary importance and sometimes irrelevant or even harmful at the stage of rebuilding the social fabric of a newly liberated people. What is needed for success at *this* stage is a capacity for disciplined and co-operative effort, a healthy respect for laws which are of the people's own making, a spirit of tolerance and accommodation and a readiness to subordinate personal ends to the demands of social welfare. These qualities have to be cultivated through various educative agencies and through the quiet but irresistible pressure of social institutions. If the dawn of freedom in India had not been sullied by blood and suffering and bitterness, which immediately preceded and followed the partition of the country, people would have entered into the new era of freedom in a very different mood, based on optimism. As it was, the country found itself confronted with a terrible situation, and the problems of refugees, of communal disorders, of the breakdown of law and the disruption of economic life threatened to destroy our freedom and, at least for a time, they did completely overshadow that great achievement.

If Gandhiji had been vouchsafed a longer life, he would have turned the full force of his dynamic and mellowed personality towards this objective, and his love and wisdom and spiritual strength could have sucked the poison out of our system and redeemed our national soul. But this was not to be. Even then, during the few fateful months after the 15th of August, when his serene light shone in our midst, it was he who stood between us and the madness and hysteria and violence that had swept both India and Pakistan like a plague. I shudder to think what might have been the fate, not only of the Muslim minority but of the whole of India and the values and ideals for which it has stood—at its best and highest—if Gandhiji had not thrown himself into the arena

and staked his life for the cause of decency and peace. While the whole of India was rejoicing, as best as it could, and celebrating the 15th of August, this lonely pilgrim, this frail man of God, was trudging the villages of Bengal to allay the flames of communal madness, knowing that the fight for freedom had not ended but had to be continued in the hearths and homes and in the hearts and minds of millions of people living in the villages and cities of India. In the last precious weeks of his life, he was carrying on the same errand of peace and mercy at Delhi where inflamed fanaticism had broken the bonds not only of human decency but also of law and order. And he was planning to extend this operation to Pakistan, for geographical frontiers have no meaning in a campaign of service and peace. Through this heroic work, he was at least able to cry 'halt' to the madness in his country and give the nation breathing time to call up and consolidate some of its inner spiritual resources, even as the administration of oxygen might give a desperately gasping patient the chance to fight back to life.

The second limiting factor was also psychologically inherent in the situation. If we wish to develop the qualities that guard and sustain freedom, we cannot do so to any appreciable degree when people are in a state of political slavery. It may be possible to lay down the foundations: in the case of the elect, one may actually succeed in implanting them. But a large majority of the ordinary people can acquire the attitudes and qualities of freedom when they have *actually* had a chance to live under conditions of freedom. So, it would not be reasonable to expect that the forty crores of men and women could have been trained for democracy or freedom before they had any vital experience of genuinely free and democratic institutions. Now is the time, however, to acquire that experience, and this would have been possible naturally and smoothly if freedom had come under normal conditions. But as teachers, educators and intellectual leaders—I use that phrase with a due sense of modesty, but if we, who are connected with educational and cultural work, will not assume that role, who will?—our problem *now* is much more difficult.

It has become necessary for us to examine it intelligently and dispassionately and to decide what we can do to arrest the forces of disruption and dishonesty and create a climate of integrity and concord which is essential for the successful functioning of democracy. Gandhiji has blazed a new trail and left behind a rich legacy of moral and spiritual wisdom as well as practical common sense. He has broken down the barriers and bridged the distance which divided the classes from the masses, the politicians and the intellectuals from the common people, and so the way is open for us to follow in his footsteps and carry on the task of bringing about an intellectual reorientation both amongst the educated classes and the people in general.

Broadly speaking, it seems to me that there are two main issues involved in the problem. Firstly, we have to fight resolutely and systematically against all those morally paralysing tendencies which are producing various forms of narrowness, intolerance and fanaticism amongst us. In spite of the social injustices and discriminations that have disfigured our society from time to time, our tradition has, on the whole, been one of humanism. I use that word not in a technical or philosophical sense but as denoting the antithesis of exclusivism and illiberalism. We have, at our best, welcomed and assimilated philosophical and religious ideas which have come from various sources and used them to enrich the pattern of our thought and culture, instead of rejecting them as foreign. And whenever we have departed from that wholesome tradition, the result has been degeneration and decay. In fact, as some of our great writers and thinkers—Gandhi, Tagore, Iqbal, Radhakrishnan, Jawaharlal, Azad — have pointed out over and over again in their writings, India has been great and progressive when it has been receptive, with the windows of its heart and mind wide open. It has tended to decline whenever it has shut itself into mental isolation and refused to assimilate new values and cultural trends. If this was true in the past, it is hundred times truer today when distances have vanished and science and industry have linked up, not only the people of each country but all the peoples of the

world, into a closer bond of inter-dependence than ever befc Any tendencies, therefore, that accentuate division and intc rance—whether based on provincialism or regionalism communalism or sectarianism or linguistic differences—are ı only antithetical to the true genius of India but are calcula to weaken her political and moral strength. We must use schools and colleges and other educational, cultural a propaganda agencies to fight against this darkening men and to ensure that geographical, cultural and religi affiliations are not allowed to disrupt the sense of basic natio unity. There is nothing wrong about them; it is good for peo to love their homes or their language or their religion; th things are woven as so many strands of different hues i our culture. But love is an inclusive not an exclusive sen ment; there is no reason in the nature of things why th attachments should come in the way of our devotion to wi ideals and loyalties. It is true that the appeal to the narr and the immediate is easier and people can be united m readily on the basis of common prejudices and phobias. I it is part of the function of Education to substitute broader view for the narrower, the ultimate view for immediate, and commend the difficult but right path, wh it would be fatally easy and attractive to choose wrong one.

There is a parting of ways here between the teacher, the one hand, and the demagogue, the ordinary politician a the propagandist, on the other. They are often out to expl people's prejudices and fanaticism to their *own* advantage a therefore, their interest lies in acting as a megaphone these evil traits. The true teacher and thinker, howev refuses to swim with the current or to pander to popu prejudices. He is concerned primarily with the inculcation right values and attitudes and, while he is anxious to study a understand mass psychology in order to achieve effectiven of approach, he is indifferent to popular acclaim. He has— should have—the courage to swim *against* the current. So we are to be true to this spirit, we must use all the psycl logical resources at our disposal to inculcate in the youn

generation a liberal outlook, a broad vision and the gracious spirit of tolerance. We would be unworthy of our position if we are not willing to take this stand resolutely in favour of what we consider right and against what we know to be wrong. Otherwise, if I may repeat that beautiful remark, 'when the salt has lost its savour, wherewith will it be salted?'

The *second* issue that confronts us is a general decline in civic standards which is seen in the growing corruption, nepotism and jobbery in our public life, in the lowering of efficiency in everyday things, in the decline of our pride in craftsmanship and our capacity for disciplined and co-operative effort, against which our public leaders have been raising their voice of protest—repeatedly but in vain. I am not naive enough to believe that all these things, which have their roots in socio-economic conditions, can be cured only through educative influences. But I have no doubt that even the most perfect socio-economic system—and what a distant prospect that is!—cannot possibly change, by itself, the hearts and minds of the people and that it is necessary to supplement it by a conscious educational effort directed to these ends. I am not at all sure that our educationists and educational institutions have seriously concerned themselves with this problem. They have been preoccupied far too much with examinations, syllabuses, text books and the study of specialized branches of knowledge to be able to give the students either a broad and coherent view of the world and their place in it, or a sensitiveness to questions of values, attitudes and standards. I am amazed at the way our students often pass through colleges, intellectually unscathed, emotionally unquickened and without forming habits of hard work, integrity and critical thinking. Naturally, therefore, in later life, they fall an easy victim to slackness, inefficiency and glib propaganda. It is this psychological "state of the nation" against which we have to struggle.

I would venture to suggest that all the recent political distortions in our national life and the emergence of conflicting groups—with their stress on separatism, their technique of exploiting differences, their narrow, revivalist and intolerant

outlook—are *not* merely political facts; they are the moral psychological symptoms of a deep-rooted disease. And w appears to the superficial observer as a pull of power amor different individuals or groups is also, at a deeper leve pull for power between competing ideologies and values life. As educators, we are part of this great fight betw reason, decency, tolerance and humanism, on the one ha and intolerance, illiberalism, obscurantism and blind r valism, on the other. It is open to us, of course, to rem comfortably settled in our ivory towers and not to join is with the forces of darkness. The life of the scholar, thinker, the scientist and the artist, offers many attracti which it is difficult for many to resist. But this role is worthy of us under any circumstances and it is speci unworthy, if not *dangerous*, at this formative stage of a r national mind and character. Any wisdom or sense of ri values or moral and social understanding that has been gi to us carries with it a great responsibility—the responsibi of sharing it with other educationally or mentally less for nate. Each one of us has to face the question that God asked of man:

> *"Thou hast received from us the word of Truth.*
> *Why has not thou passed it on to others?"*

We *must* pass it on and take the consequences, for tr not only is sometimes unpleasant but often creates enemi Of this we should not be afraid, for the English poet Mack has commented aptly on the man who boasted of having enemies:

> *"You have hit no traitor on the hip,*
> *You have dashed no cup from perjured lip,*
> *You have never turned the wrong to right,*
> *You have been a coward in the fight."*

May it be given to us to fight hard and fight clean in t battle, under the inspiration of the vision and wisdom that v Mahatma Gandhi's and the courage that is Jawaharlal's!

VI

THE ASIAN APPROACH TO CULTURE

EVER since the progress of modern experimental science and the advent of the Industrial Revolution, the leadership of the world has been in the hands of the West which has given many valuable gifts to mankind—unlimited horizons for the development of science, an unparalleled increase in productive resources, a higher standard of living, better organization of social services, and many other material benefits too well known to need recapitulation. But the good that it has given us has been mixed with a great deal of evil—evil which at times appears to be overwhelmingly powerful. Its amazingly rapid means of communication, its marvels of electricity, its "iron lungs" and anaesthetics—which help to increase comfort or diminish pain—are offset by large-scale and more effective economic exploitation of whole classes and peoples by powerful groups, and by incredibly horrible means of destruction, culminating in the Atom and Hydrogen bombs. This shows that, while the western mind has succeeded in tapping and utilizing unprecedented sources of power, it has not succeeded in harnessing that power primarily to the service of worthy and beneficent purposes. It looks as if, at the birth of a promising new age for mankind, a malevolent fairy had put a curse on it and contrived to poison all the birthday gifts offered by the other fairies! The greatest and most pressing problem of mankind today is obviously to free itself of this curse and make proper use of the promising new powers.

What about Asia? During this period of about two hundred years, Asia has been, till recently, in a state of decadence and apathy, forced—if not content—to play the second fiddle to Europe and America. It was dazzled by the cruder manifesta-

tions of western civilization and, physically as well as mentally, overwhelmed by the power which they gave to the West. The result was not only loss of political and economic liberty but something even more tragic—most Asian nations began to forget, and some even to despise, their own cultural idiom and heritage and to copy uncritically the external forms of western civilization. Such an attitude of inferiority, of "cultural mendicancy" did incalculable harm to the soul of the Asian peoples. They failed to preserve their cultural and artistic integrity and to assert their social and ethical values, and thus the whole pattern of their life was greatly impoverished in meaning. They were also unable to establish direct stimulating contacts with their Asian neighbours—in fact, the contact that did exist often depended on the intermediary of western powers! So great was the estrangement amongst neighbouring Asian nations that they saw one another not as they really were but as they appeared to them through borrowed western glasses. The Indians, the Chinese, the Arabs, the Russians and other Asian peoples appeared to one another as "queer" or "outlandish". Superficial and petty differences were allowed to obscure that inner unity of outlook and *weltanschauung* which had existed for centuries. And this unnatural state of estrangement between neighbouring nations and unfamiliarity with their own souls continued to exist for many weary decades.

The First World War set afoot a twin process of disillusionment and awakening which enabled the bemused and sleeping giant, Asia, to see the many chinks in the armour of its powerful adversary. Western civilization had generated, within its bosom, certain strong forces of self-destruction which were slowly undermining its glittering facade; the finer spirits of the West were themselves quick to perceive and proclaim this danger. Asia was not now dazzled by the West but critical of its naive or impudent claims to superiority and weary and impatient of its chains. This process was completed by World War II which demonstrated, with frightful emphasis, the ethical bankruptcy of western civilization. Asia must concern itself now not only with the problem of her own freedom—

ı has been achieved in a large measure—and her material re but also—with due humility—with the much bigger em of the salvation of the world. This depends on our to solve, with better success than the West, the basic em of the age which may be stated as the problem of lishing balance and harmony between our great scientific echnological advances and our social and moral capacity lize them for decent and humane purposes. This means, er words, that we must somehow bring about a fusion een Power, the giant released by modern science, and ı, which is inspired by the spirit of religion and brings a iveness to values in its train. It is this Vision alone that ive us a true appreciation of the nature and destiny of and his right relationships with other men. It should be ecial role and privilege of Asia to make her contribution nging about a proper co-ordination and concord between two great pillars of a better world.

a has been the birthplace of all the great religions of orld—Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam thers—which have, on the whole, always tended to stress mportance of *bringing people together* on the basis of ıon spiritual truths and values. In the fields of arts crafts, literature and philosophy, Asian cultures have ed the significance of *Peace.* They have been concerned vith the pursuit of wealth and power and what Bertrand ell has called the "possessive happiness" than with the ful pursuit of goodness and truth and "creative happi- . I am not vain or ignorant enough to suggest that all eoples of the East, or even a considerable section, are lly devoted to the pursuit of these values, or that the is exclusively or predominantly preoccupied with the or power and economic advantage to the neglect of the r values. Nor do I subscribe to the rather glib assertion, foolishly made, that the West is 'material' while the is 'spiritual'. Such a view over-simplifies, to the extent sifying, the picture. If that were so, the East would have essing problems of ethical and social injustices, and the would not have built up the fine system of social services

that it has done in this century. Not only that but this view postulates a kind of absolute dualism between 'materialism' and 'spiritualism' which has no valid justification. Man's life, whether viewed individually or collectively, is psycho-physical, which has developed on the basis of his 'body-mind' and the claims of the body are just as imperative and, in their proper place, as right as the claims of the spirit. No proper social order or good life can develop unless the claims of both can be harmonized within a sensible pattern of civilization and culture. The inner conflicts and antagonism of human life, with which men of vision and faith have always struggled in the past and which have become specially accentuated and embittered in our own age, stem from the fact that the claims of the one or the other have been given undue weightage from time to time. Hedonism, or the seeking of physical pleasures and delights as the main end of life and ascetism, or the denial of the body and even its normal desires and appetites, represent the two extreme points of this eternal swing of the pendulum. Every age must, therefore, face this problem afresh, establish its own proper norms and standards, and redress the lost balance.

Having made this necessary reservation, I think it is fair to say that the *chief* contribution of modern western civilization is Science and its technique which has increased man's control over Nature and added immensely to his power. Eastern cultures have, as a whole, stood for the values of the spirit and the riches of the mind which can only be cultivated in an atmosphere of peace and creative living. The future of the world cannot be ensured unless we have the courage, the imagination, and the good sense to combine the best values of both into an integrated pattern of life and succeed in wedding Power with Vision—Vision which would enable us to perceive the essential oneness of mankind and to cultivate human personality as the repository of the divine flame. One of the most significant contributions that Asia can make to the concept of a truly humane culture is to reassert the primacy of the Individual over the great 'Collective' which has been making dangerous inroads on the territory that

should belong to the individual. The power of the State has grown so enormously in the last few decades and science has placed at its disposal such potent instruments for moulding the opinions, ideas and emotions of the citizens into a set pattern that the individual is losing his real significance in the scheme of things. While, on the one hand, democracy claims to stand for the rights of the individual, the whole trend of modern civilization, with its large-scale organization, is to curtail real freedom. The State maintains the forms and external paraphernalia of democracy while the real spirit which should inspire it is being elbowed out. This is happening in spite of the fact that the enlightened spirits of the West—as of the East—realise the dangers of this tendency and have been trying to resist it. Now, the traditional Asian approach to culture has not accepted this new relationship of the Individual to the great Collective. It has always attached greater importance to the individual. It has held in the highest esteem not the power of the State or the wealth of the great businessmen and industrialists but its saints and sages, its prophets and priests, its bards and faqirs. This is so, to some extent, even today when commercialism, with its perverted values, has extended its sway over the mind of the East also. In spite of the fact that the large majority of the people of the East, like those of the West, bow before power and wealth, their genuine reverence and admiration are addressed to men like Buddha and Muhammad and Asoka and Gandhi whose personality triumphed over the contemporary forces and tendencies of their environment and who taught their peoples the lesson of *tempered* renunciation rather than acquisitiveness and exploitation. In an age which is dominated powerfully by these latter impulses, it should be the special function of Asia to restore the balance and put wealth and power in their proper place, i.e. as handmaids to the development of the 'good life' and not synonymous with it. It would not be correct to say, and I do not wish to imply, that Asian cultures have all advocated anything like asceticism. They developed under the influence of different religions, in different geographical environments and amongst different races with their

own psychological characteristics and naturally, they were profoundly coloured by all these factors. I do, however, suggest that there is a certain basic similarity of outlook amongst them, and that consists in not regarding the accumulation of worldly goods or power as the highest end of life. Some have, indeed, gone much further in the direction of checking materialistic ambitions and physical desires and, in the words of Tagore, they have "warned against the Thing imprisoning the Spirit". Others have advocated the conquest of the world of matter—not its denial or turning away from it—but they have at the same time held up the ideal of *Faqr*, a detachment of the spirit which would enable Man to rise superior to the temptations of his worldly possessions and not to barter his integrity or his idealism for their sake. Thus there is in the Asian approach, on the one hand, a desire to envisage clearly the proper place of *Ends* and *Means* and not to let the *efficiency* of the latter overshadow the ethical and moral significance of the former. On the other hand, its best advocates—like Gandhi in our own time—have always recognized the subtle, unbreakable inter-connection between the quality of Means and Ends. Good ends must be sought and pursued through good means. If the Means are corrupt or inferior, they will inevitably debase the Ends also. You cannot establish freedom or democracy or any other political desideratum through mass murder and the use of the Atom Bomb; you cannot genuinely reform society through individuals whose own lives are unclean. Hence, its emphasis on the reform of the individual, on the cleansing of his heart and mind—an emphasis which is sometimes apt to overlook the complementary need of building up the proper kind of social institutions and social services to which the West has latterly devoted itself with considerable success. The future of mankind can only be ensured if the best features of these two approaches—the freedom of the individual spirit and the efficiency of social organization, the Vision that determines right Ends and the Power which can forge the Means and the machinery for their realization—are properly integrated.

How can this be done? Theoretically, it is not difficult to

point the way. European civilization has mastered the technique of better and fuller *production* of goods and services, and the Asiatic nations must learn its scientific techniques in order to be able to eradicate the poverty, disease and ignorance which infect the life of their masses and deny them the possibility of a rich and full life. Soviet Russia has tried with success the gigantic experiment of better and more equitable *distribution* of goods and services and installed social and economic justice as the guiding principle in its social economy. Europe and Asia have both to adjust their economy to this ideal of social justice which would ensure to all, and not merely to the favoured few, an access to the material and cultural heritage of the race. Asia, in its turn, has to try and win back the allegiance of the war-torn and greed-harassed world to the eternal values of the human spirit—respect for man, love of peace, tolerance of differences, and attachment to that religious spirit which links man's ephemeral life to God. On such a basis alone can man build the truly 'good life'. Without these values the dynamism, which modern civilization undoubtedly possesses, will be wasted in internecine conflicts because it will lack the sense of right direction. If, through its example and precedent, Asia can take the lead in this direction it will be able to blaze a new and glorious trail in the history of man.

Can Asia do it? Undoubtedly. *Will* Asia do it? I do not know. It depends on the quality of the leadership which emerges in its various countries which are just stepping into the dawn of freedom. But there can be no doubt that the chances of Asia fulfilling her destiny will be greatly improved if there is increased cultural association and contact amongst the nations of this great continent. Thus alone can they realize afresh their old community of outlook, based on the sharing of certain fundamental values and attitudes of life. They are, as it were, in quest of their own soul and, even when they have discovered it, they will have to interpret its message with reference to modern needs and problems. In this pilgrimage of the intellect and the spirit, the companionship of kindred minds is a great help and inspiration, and the signifi-

cance of the recent movement towards better inter-Asian understanding lies precisely in the hope that it holds out of facilitating this quest and enabling these nations to play their part worthily in the counsels of the world. It is a matter of some gratification that the first steps have been already taken by India in the direction of bringing about a closer cultural *rapprochement* amongst Asian nations under the leadership of men like Jawaharlal Nehru and Abul Kalam Azad.

We should, however, always remember that our aim and ambition should be to contribute to the fullness and richness of life for all—*not* for the East only—because that is the only approach consistent with our genius, and also because in the world of today "no one dare live unto himself alone". It is a truth which applies as much to nations and continents as to individuals, and whatever cultural and spiritual contribution Asia can make must eventually be placed at the disposal of the whole world.

VII

THE SPIRIT OF ISLAMIC CULTURE*

I

I WELCOME greatly the privilege of addressing this distinguished and select gathering on certain aspects of Islamic Culture and its significance for the present age. In a world, overhung by the menace of a war of total destruction and in a country which has recently passed through a period of poignant travail, moral and political, it might perhaps seem somewhat strange to meet for a discussion of literary or cultural values for which organizations like the P. E. N. and the Islamic Research Association stand. I know of many people who are so obsessed with the national and the international tragedy that has overtaken this generation that they regard cultural issues as secondary. The Atom Bomb, they argue, will make short work of everything, and when fanaticism is unleashed, all cultural values—Hindu, Muslim, Christian, etc. —will be trampled into the dust. So why should one play the fiddle when Rome is burning?

It would be worthwhile to examine this point of view which raises certain fundamental questions: What are the most important, the most significant things in life? In assessing the value of the numerous activities which claim our attention and loyalty, what criterion shall we adopt? Is it right and wise to occupy ourselves with art and literature, with social and ethical values and with the "world of the mind" when war may be lurking round the next corner? Or should we put them into the cold storage for the time being and concen-

* From an Address at the 10th Joint Anniversary Celebrations of P. E. N. and the Islamic Research Association.

trate exclusively on political and military manœuvring strategy and what are somewhat superiorly called *"practical affairs?"* If we accept the latter alternative, what does it imply? It would lead to the position that, when danger threatens, we must throw overboard all that makes life gracious and meaningful, all that invests it with truth or beauty or goodness, all that raises man above the brutish level from which he has so slowly and painfully emerged. That would surely be taking a topsy-turvy view of things! What is our objective in building up a free and powerful nation but to create conditions in which the creative spirit of man can go adventuring in its ceaseless quest for knowledge, for beauty and for the gifts of the 'good life'? And the *real* story of man—as distinguished from the so-called 'history' that clutters our text-books—is to be found, not in the record of battles fought and the political wranglings attempted but in the endless striving of men and women—now as lone workers, now functioning co-operatively—towards greater perfection in arts and crafts, science and philosophy, literature and poetry and in the adjustment of social relationships. I am not belittling the role of economic and political effort; I concede readily the claim that no abiding system of culture and ethics can be built up except on the foundations of reasonable material conditions and standards of life. But it is necessary for us, who labour —however obscurely—in the world of the mind, to place the values and ends of life in their proper perspective and determine their correct order of priority—not in order of *time* but in order of *significance*—and to reassert the primacy of cultural and spiritual values. All the resources in men and money and materials that are invested in building up national solidarity and strength, even in winning national freedom, will be wasted if the freedom gained is not utilized to create gracious and equitable patterns of culture and civilization. We need not, therefore, be apologetic if we give our time and thought to these values for it is only through their proper appraisal and appreciation and through their quickening into a living and motivating force that the world can be eventually redeemed. Those who believe that the present world crisis is

purely political and economic crisis are blind or short-[illegible]; *it is at bottom a spiritual crisis, a battle of values* I have tried to elucidate from various points of view in [illegible] book. Its scope and intensity may be new and unprecedented but, in one form or another, it has been always going on. The history of the world is a continuous tug-of-war between the forces of peaceful creation and destruction, between good will and ill will, between humanism and narrow [illegible]ratism, between social justice and group tyranny, between the urge for service and the lust for exploitation. It should not be hard to accept the view that any movement, religious or cultural or scientific, that tends to reinforce the creative and humanistic tradition is a contribution to the good of mankind.

II

This is, however, a plea for the sympathetic study and active pursuit of *all* cultural values, while today I am concerned primarily with the values of Muslim Culture, i.e. culture as it has developed under the impulse and inspiration of Islam during the last fourteen centuries. Why is it important for us, i.e. for *all* Indians irrespective of their religious affiliations, and for other people, for that matter, to study this culture? One can think of a variety of reasons but I shall refer to only two of them. In the first place, the world has become one in a sense in which it was never one before and this is true in spite of the acute and dangerous conflicts and differences which characterize the international scene. In fact, they are dangerous, precisely because the world has become so closely knit together and whatever enriches or imperils one part of it has a repercussion all along the line. And this interdependence is not only industrial and technical but also cultural and intellectual, for ideas move even quicker than men and materials. In such a world, ignorance of one another's culture is not only foolish and ill-mannered but fraught with great danger. Nations and communities cannot afford to build their specially insulated "ivory towers" where

they might cultivate their cultural characteristics, ignor: their relationship and interaction with other cultures. In cultural give-and-take, Islamic culture has much of value give and much to take from other contemporary cultures. it turns away from this enriching contact and, contrary to genius, follows a policy of isolation it does so at the risk losing its creative vigour and vitality. Secondly, so far India is concerned, it has been for centuries the hospita home of many cultures which have come into mutua enriching contact here and achieved a measure of fusi Some of the most prominent strands of Indian culture, we know it today, have come from the Dravidian culture, Aryan-Hindu culture (with its Buddhist variation) the Mus culture (with its many tributary streams, Turkish, Pers and Moghul) and the Western culture brought in mainly the British. The traditional genius of India has been, gener: speaking, one of large-hearted tolerance. It did not rej cultural gifts from across the borders but welcomed them a assimilated many of their features into its own elastic a growing pattern. This applies not only to the Aryans w also came, it must be remembered, from across the bord and to the Muslims, who made this country their home a have been here for a thousand years, but even to the Brit who stayed here only as conquerors and whose connect lasted barely 150 years. In spite of the hostile and unfavo able auspices under which the West established its cont with India, many western influences have become permanen embedded into our culture and civilization. The contributi of the Muslim culture—I do not advisedly use the phr "the contributions of the Muslims" because Muslim cult as it developed in medieval India was not built up by Muslims alone but represents a mighty co-operative effort which many communities have participated willingly—are many and so varied and they are so securely woven into total pattern of Indian culture that they cannot be disentan and removed without weakening and impoverishing the wh pattern. But on account of recent political happenings India, which strained intercommunal relations to the break

point, efforts are being made by some groups to weaken or destroy this beautiful pattern. One can see many indications of this reactionary and obscurantist mentality which must be resisted and re-educated—not merely in the interest of Muslims or Muslim culture but of India and Indian culture as a whole. When the wound of partition is still raw, one can understand—though one should not accept or excuse—this attitude but, if India is to be great culturally, it is essential that the historic continuity of her cultural tradition should not be broken. As Maulana Azad remarked in one of his Convocation Addresses: "It is possible that other nations may have to learn new lessons for broadening their outlook and for cultivating a spirit of tolerance. But so far as India is concerned, we can say with pride that it is the main trait of our ancient civilization and that we have been steeped in it for thousands of years. Here all faiths, all cultures, all modes of living were allowed to flourish and find their own salvation." Shall we forego this great legacy of tolerance and broad-mindedness in the 20th century when it is needed much more urgently and desperately than ever before? With his unerring sense of what was just and right and his deep humanism, Mahatma Gandhi had realized this truth and was working with all the strength of his great personality to guard against this danger. He urged over and over again that social, political and cultural narrowness spells disaster and ruin—both for the majority and the minorities. And, of course, what applies to India applies equally emphatically—in fact more emphatically—to Pakistan. It can no more afford a policy of cultural isolation and exclusiveness or reject the gracious fruits of a thousand years' old contact between Hindu and Muslim cultures. Apart from being reactionary, such a policy would be repugnant to the genius of Islam. So far as India is concerned, I would venture to express the opinion that, because the population percentage of Muslims in the Indian Union has been reduced and their political influence as a group is weaker, it is all the more necessary to study their cultural contribution—and those of Islamic culture generally—in a spirit of appreciation and sympathy so that their

cultural values may not be swamped merely by the accident of their being a political minority. Moreover, India has, as her good neighbours, many Muslim countries in the Near East and Middle East with whom her relations have always been cordial and the study of Islamic culture would be an important connecting link with these countries.

III

So much for the importance of the issues involved. Let me now turn to an analysis of a few salient features of Islamic culture which have general significance. What would impress anyone with a fair and objective outlook as an outstanding characteristic of early Islamic culture—in an age which was dominated by narrow concepts of race and sect and class—is its fine spirit of Tolerance. And this is a fact in spite of the centuries' old propaganda carried on in ignorant or malicious quarters to suggest that Islam has a narrow and dogmatic ideology and that it was imposed on the world "on the point of the sword". Perhaps it is the unhappy legacy of the age of the Crusades when Christianity and Islam confronted each other as the two most important proselytizing religions of the world—and propaganda was even then one of the great weapons of war! It is amazing that, even a distinguished scholar like Margoliouth and a standard work like the Encyclopaedia Britannica make statements about Islam—and its great Prophet—which would be ludicrous if they were not tragic, i.e. if they did not deepen the tragedy of misunderstandings and prejudices which make international concord so difficult today. To those who are interested in a fair appraisal of the teachings of Islam and cannot afford to read monumental books of older authorities, I would recommend the study of Iqbal's "Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam", or Maulana Azad's masterly introduction to his translation of the Quran, of Amir Ali's "Spirit of Islam" and of the writings of Dr. Bhagwan Das, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Sundarlal on the subject. They will then find that Islamic Culture derives its spirit of tolerance from the basic

teachings of Islam, which advocate an *evolutionary view of religion.* Islam does not teach or maintain that it is the only true religion, while other religions are nothing but so many heresies. It is part of a Muslim's *faith* that every people and every age has had its prophets and men of God who showed the right path according to the needs of the times, and who carried the development of Religion a step further by relating it to contemporary needs and removing from it the dust of irrelevant accretions. The Prophet of Islam likewise crystallized and completed the great work done by the earlier prophets whom he taught his followers to hold in the highest esteem. In the words of the Quran, "There has never been a people but had its prophet *('Nazir')*. And again: "Say, that I believe in Allah and His messengers and the Books and His Prophets". How refreshingly different is this view from that which consigns the followers of all other religions to the outer darkness of hell! It ensures the fullest freedom of belief and worship to persons of all faiths; for, according to the Quran, *"there can be no compulsion in religion"* and any creed or doctrine imposed by force can never partake of the quality of religious experience. Islam makes it perfectly clear, and reiterates it over and over again, that spiritual peace and salvation are *not* the monopoly of any particular religious group but are open to all who have faith and lead righteous lives. I stress this point at some length to underline the fact that Tolerance, which is so essential for the peace and the sanity of the world today, is an *integral* part of Islam and no interpretation of its culture or ideology would be right which failed to take this into account.

There is no doubt that, by and large, the history of Muslim peoples presents a gratifying record of *practical* as well as *intellectual* tolerance of other peoples and their faiths and cultures. The intense religious fanaticism, which characterized the Spanish Inquisition in Spain and flourished in Byzantine, was conspicuously absent in Muslim countries where Jews and their cultural and religious pursuits unhindered. Intellectually, Islamic culture borrowed large-heartedly from Greek culture in its early stages, so much so that the Hellenistic tradition,

on which western culture is based, did not come to the West directly from the Greeks but through the Muslims who appropriated it from them, preserved it, added to it and then passed it on to Europe when it emerged from the 'dark ages'. It is also a matter of common knowledge amongst oriental scholars—as a distinguished scholar of Islamic Studies, Mr. A. A. Fyzee, has brought out in one of his valuable papers—that Islamic Culture was not the creation of Muslims alone but was the result of the joint efforts of Muslims, Jews, Christians and even free thinkers, and many races—Arabs, Syrians, Persians, Turks, Spaniards, Egyptians and Indians—contributed to it and bore aloft its banner. We find this cultural large-heartedness, this readiness to borrow and assimilate cultural strands from everywhere, in many countries which came under Muslim sway, including India. Many people have heard only of Akbar or possibly of Dara Shikoh who patronized scholars of different faiths and cultural antecedents, but they do not know that the tradition goes back to the Prophet himself who said:

> "Acquire knowledge, even though it may be in China" and "'Hikmat' (wisdom) is the lost property of the Momin (the true believer); he is entitled to it where he may find it."

This approach tended to knock down the geographical walls which had been allowed to rise up in the 'world of the mind'—those obstinate and persistent and senseless walls which have reared their ugly heads over and over again in human history and given religion to languages, geographical boundaries to science and narrow nationality to culture. The Nazis have not been the only sinners in this respect—we have all sinned to a greater or lesser degree, and God knows there is much in the history of *all* peoples which they would fain wipe out! Nor would it be true to say that Muslims have not, in practice, been guilty of religious narrowness or persecution. But I do submit, with a full sense of responsibility, that fanaticism can find *no* sanction in Islam and wherever Muslims have been guilty of it they have fallen from religious grace and sinned

against the light that was in them. It is necessary to reiterate this truth firmly, because not only adverse and ill informed propaganda but also certain recent happenings, e.g. certain *political* trends in Pakistan, have created an entirely wrong picture of *Islamic* values in the minds of large numbers of peoples in India and outside.

Another important characteristic of Islamic culture, which is of far-reaching significance, is its frank and unequivocal acceptance of the claims both of the matter and the mind, the flesh and the spirit, this world and the hereafter. Its attitude is expressed pithily in the oft repeated prayer which occurs in the Quran: "O Lord! Give us the good things in this Life and the Hereafter." This statement is not, if I may say so, an expression of avidity but enshrines a profoundly important point of view. It differs sharply from some other important and influential views of life which have shaped the thought and conduct of many ages and communities. There is, for example, the view of what is rather vaguely called the Materialistic School, which holds that the meaning of life is to be found in the satisfaction of our material wants, which quests after power and riches and which has been responsible, in its *better* manifestation, for a great deal of the progress of human civilization. Then there is the philosophical view, which rejects the world of material phenomena and forces, which seeks to withdraw from this 'dark vale' of tears and misery and concentrates only on man's *inner* development—intellectual or cultural or artistic or spiritual. The men of research, the poets, the painters, the mystics have often sought refuge in private 'ivory towers' of their own, oblivious to the imperious call of the world around. Islam has no sympathy or patience with this individualistic and selfish 'paradise'. It accepts wholeheartedly the challenge of "the world of matter", with all its rich resources; it rejects asceticism as a way of life, and welcomes the conquest of Nature by man. But when this world has been conquered and Power is controlled by his hands and his mind, it has to be exploited *not* for selfish ends but for establishing the good life on earth—material and cultural—for all. The good Muslim must retain an inner

attitude of independence, of superiority to the trappings of wealth and power. This is what Iqbal calls an attitude of *Faqr*, a kind of asceticism of the spirit which would enable him to spurn the temptations which ensnare the feet of weaker mortals. For him this world is, in the words of the Quran, "a field where we sow the seeds for the Hereafter", and "he who is blind in this world is blind in the next"—a clear affirmation of their innate relationship which can only be broken at grave peril. Roomi, the great poet and mystic of Islam, puts one phase of this truth with the piquancy of an epigram when he says:

"For him who can stalk across the skies,
'Tis not difficult to tread on the earth!"

So, material riches are not, in the Muslim *weltanschauung* the *end* of life but only the *means* which may (or may not!) be used for its spiritual and cultural enrichment. To ensure that they will be so used, it introduces the concept of *"Hudud-ullah"* (the limits defined by God) within which all personal and collective life and activities are to be organized and which no true believer can ignore or transgress. As Pikthall has remarked in one of his lectures: "In the Islamic polity there are no such ideas as irresponsible power or irresponsible wealth or irresponsible God." Man is responsible before God —and before his own conscience—for all that he does in religious as well as secular matters. Many of these limitations relate to the control of group relationships—prohibition of usury and gambling, imposition of *Zakat* and *Khums* on all who can afford them, rules of warfare which enjoin scrupulous respect for treaties, humane treatment of all civilian populations and non-interference with the enemies' means of subsistence. Its social, economic and political concepts are inspired by the ideal of Social Justice leading to social equality, and by the desire to check the growth of unjust economic anomalies due to the misuse of wealth. "He is no true Muslim," remarked the Prophet, "who eateth his fill and leaveth his neighbour hungry." How few, one wonders, are

true Muslims in the world today, judged by this simple criterion? But the ideal *did* inspire many in the course of the centuries. "It is impossible for me," said 'Ali when he was the Khalifa, "to sleep peacefully if there is even one hungry person in Medina," and he used to go about at night with a load of bread on his back to bring food to the needy who were too self-respecting to ask for alms!

Now, I am not suggesting that Islam *as such* stands for socialism or communism—for one thing these systems were not relevant to the age in which their teachings were presented—but I do hold that the social and ethical considerations which underlie modern movements to secure better social and economic justice for all, are not only implicitly but to some extent explicitly operative in Islamic thought. And any Muslim —or any human being—who remains indifferent to, or unaffected by, the poignancy of the present situation—which condemns hundreds of millions to lead sub-human lives—is a traitor to the spirit of Islam as well as the spirit of humanism. Islam has repeatedly stressed the principle of "collective responsibility"—namely, that no man liveth unto himself alone, that we are all members of the family of God, that every one is in truth his brother's keeper and can, on no account, shirk this responsibility—which knocks the bottom out of the "ivory tower" theory of life. The Quran states this truth in a striking verse:

> "And beware of the catastrophe which, when it befalls, will not be confined only to those of you who have specially transgressed" (but will sweep all into its train).

The special relevance of this principle in the modern interdependent world is only too obvious, and they are grievously mistaken who believe that they can sow the wind with impunity without being called upon to reap the whirlwind. Islam has stressed this fact of national and international dependence and her most positive contribution in this behalf is the attempt to abolish those differences of race and caste and colour which have always worked to disrupt the unity

of mankind. Whatever other charges may be brought against the Muslims, I think they can claim with some satisfaction that they have always been attached to the ideal of social democracy and racial, geographical and colour considerations have appealed to them less than to most other peoples. *Balal*, the dark-as-night negro of Abyssinia, occupies amongst them exactly the same place of honour as the greatest and the noblest Arab companion of the Prophet. The kinship of ideals and faiths has meant more to them than that of blood and country which some writer has described as "earth rootedness" and the international brotherhood of Muslim peoples that actually came into being was at least better than the aggressive geographical nationalsim of later days.

But there is another point which the Muslims of today need to ponder over as much as others, because they too seem to have forgotten it and to have fallen under the sway of ideas which are repugnant to the spirit of Islam. The real line of demarcation in Islam is *not* between people professing different religions or belonging to different races or colours but between those who stand for truth, decency and justice and those who are 'transgressors' and evil-doers, irrespective of their formal labels In emphatic and unequivocal words, the Prophet of Islam has defined the ethical and moral principles which should govern the conduct of every true Muslim:

> "He is not of us who sides with his tribe in aggression and he is not of us who dies while assisting his tribe in injustice."

Thus an appeal to religious fellowship in a cause that is not just is not only meaningless but definitely sinful; *it places the person beyond the Prophet's fold*. In fact, the basic law of human relationships has been stated for all time by the Quran in these clear words:

> "Co-operate in all that is good and moral but
> do not co-operate in sin and injustice."

It is an absolute, unqualified injunction which rejects for ever

doctrines like "My country—right or wrong" or "My religion —right or wrong" or "My people—right or wrong". In the face of the supreme issue between Right and Wrong, Justice and Injustice, the ties of country and race and creed lose their hold and pale into insignificance. The Muslim's offer of co-operation is to be open to all, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, who do good; it is to be withheld from all who choose the path of injustice, even though they may claim formal affiliation to Islam. In one of his arresting Persian couplets, Iqbal defines the true 'Momin' (man of faith) in words which epitomize the real spirit of Islam:

> "He is a sword against Unrighteousness and a shield for Truth
> His affirmation and negation are a criterion for Good and Evil;
> Great is his forgiveness, his sense of justice, his generosity, his kindness—
> Even in a fit of wrath, his temper retains its balance."

Thus, essentially, the ethical basis of Islamic culture, on its practical side, is *humanism* which I would define as a recognition of the fact that man—not the Muslim or Hindu or Christian or Parsi, not the white man or the black man or the brown man, not the rich man or the poor man or the *petit bourgeois* but Man—is the measure of all things, the highest common factor in the arithmetic of life. All that ministers to his growth, that enriches him materially or spiritually is to be welcomed; all that arrests or inhibits his development, that builds up walls of prejudice and separatism around him is repugnant to the genius of Islam and should be rejected. Respect for individuality, for Man as an End—not a mere means for others' ends—is, therefore, implicit in Islamic thought. "The principle of ego-sustaining deed," remarks Iqbal in his Lectures "is respect for the Ego in myself *as well as in others*" which means that, unless we cultivate a sense of reverence for *others'* individuality—their opinion and belief, their ways of living and thinking, their points of *difference*

with us—our own individuality will remain warped, distorte and incomplete. One of the finest definitions of this humanisı that I have come across also occurs in one of his Persia poems where he defines the concept of 'Admiyat'—the qualit of being truly human—which is not limited by any narro social, political or religious ties but is characterized b sympathy and a sensitiveness of heart in which the believ and the unbeliever, the saint and the sinner, can all find heaven of refuge.

Religion is a ceaseless quest
Beginning in Reverence, culminating in Love!
What is "Admiyat"?—Respect for Man!
Understand then his true place!
It's a crime to utter a harsh word
For believers and unbelievers are alike God's children!
The man of God learns the ways of God
And is gracious to the believer as to the unbeliever;
Welcome belief and unbelief alike to the heart
If the heart turns away from the heart—woe betide the
heart!
Though encased in the prison-house of clay,
The heart has its domain over the entire Universe!

IV

I have presented only a few facets of Islamic culture whic I consider to be of special relevance to the modern age. It i a very inadequate picture and in some ways also an *idealize* picture—"idealized" in the sense that it presents not the actua current situation of Muslim culture but the *ideals* of tha culture. My reason for doing so is the fact that, in these da of cultural and religious intolerance, accentuated by ignoranc it is necessary that we should appreciate the *best* in on another's cultures and learn to value their deeper and high aspirations. Normally, that which is superficial and irrelevar is swept away on the torrent of Time; it is only the significar and the useful that abides. But in abnormal times and crise

there is a great danger that fanaticism may even reject things of abiding value that centuries of patient and peaceful, co-operative effort have built up and thus culturally impoverish the country for all time. This is a danger that threatens both India and Pakistan today, for both are in the throes of a pseudo-revivalism which must be resisted because it is repugnant to the spirit of the age and, so far as Islam is concerned, it is out of harmony with its real genius and tradition. If Islam has one significant contribution to offer to the world, it is its spirit of internationalism, its rejection—total and unequivocal—of the idols of race and colour and caste and geography, its affirmation of social equality and human brotherhood. In the words of Iqbal whom I take the liberty to quote again—because he is so often being misquoted for ulterior purposes!—"The most important objective of Islam is to demolish all the artificial and pernicious distinctions of caste, creed, colour and economic status. It has opposed vehemently the idea of racial superiority which is the greatest obstacle in the way of international unity and co-operation." It is impossible for anyone who is aware of the ugly temper of this age, dominated by these very concepts, to deny the importance of this contribution.

Another very valuable contribution that Islam has to make is in dealing with the critical situation created by the fact that Power has run amuck in the hands of man. We are only too poignantly aware of how scientific knowledge applied to Industry and War and their exploitation by unscrupulous persons and groups have brought our world to the brink of ruin and annihilation. As Shakespeare has put it through the mouth of Caliban: "It is good to have a giant's strength but not good to use it as a giant." Islam does not advocate the rejection of Power as evil, for civilization cannot be built up without using the many valuable resources of modern science. But it seeks to control the misuse of Power through the corrective of "Vision" from which flow the graces of love and sympathy and Intuition. Not Power, uncontrolled and unlimited but Power limited by the laws of God and the love of mankind. The divorce of Power from Vision, of Science

from Religion, of Intellect from Intuition has produced the present situation—so surcharged with greed and hatred and violence and exploitation—over which hangs the nemesis of the Atom bomb. There is literally no hope for the world, no way out of this *impasse* unless, out of all this incalculable travail of the spirit and the sufferings and sorrows of the body, is born a new and sincere realization that mankind today is a single social organism, integrated by the forces of science and technology, and unless men learn the old but ever-new lessons of love and justice, of brotherhood and humanity, of charity and sacrifice which true men of God and true religions have taught throughout the ages. Man must re-learn, in this age of Science, how to live his life "in the name of the Lord", to "surrender oneself to His will" so that one becomes a willing instrument for working out His beneficent purposes on earth. Obviously, such a state of heart and mind is possible only for a few and whole nations and communities have never attained to this great moral height. But the value of such an ideal, which seeks to control Power and harness science for the good of mankind, lies in the fact that it defines the proper *direction* of our advance. From the point of view of the larger interest of mankind it is imperative that we should learn to welcome all the help that may come our way in strengthening this vision of life—whether it comes from the religious ideology of Islam or the humanism of a Mahatma Gandhi or an Einstein or a Romain Rolland or the internationalism of an organization like the P. E. N.

India is a part of the great world and, therefore, what applies to the world applies equally to India—only in a more intimate and urgent sense. For, India has been one of the great centres of Islamic culture. No narrowness of mind, no selective blindness on either side of the border can wipe out that historic fact. She has learnt much from this culture and has in her turn made a rich contribution to its development. Some of its finest strands are woven inextricably into the warp and woof of her cultural pattern. Its arts and architecture, its languages and literature, its philosophy and religions are still a part of her great heritage. The rhythm of her musicians and the art

her painters, the gentleness of her saints and the sagacity of her rulers and administrators, the rich legacy of her scholars, writers and poets, now using Persian, now Urdu, now Hindi, now Hindustani—all these, too, have gone into the making of what we love and admire as Indian culture. They have drawn their inspiration from many sources—for there are no frontiers in the world of the mind and the wind of genius bloweth where it listeth! But they have all grown and developed and come to fruition in *this* soil which they have enriched with the blood and sweat of their body and the spiritual travail of their minds. One may as well try to separate the finger-nail from the flesh as to eradicate the gracious and many-sided impress of Muslim culture from Indian history. I have no doubt a rude surgical operation can do either but it would leave the organism bruised and poorer. A plea for the study of Islamic culture, in a spirit of broadminded appreciation, is, therefore, I repeat, *not* a plea on behalf of the Muslims of India, though they have undoubtedly served as the main (but *not* the only) receptacle for this sparkling wine. It is a plea on behalf of the future richness and greatness of India; it is a plea on behalf of values which have something to give to the whole world; it is a plea for a cultural approach inspired by vision, by humanism and by a spirit of tolerance.

In the world of today, enlightened countries devote their time and attention and resources to the study of cultures far off in point of space and time. In the British and European and American Universities, one finds scholars devoting their whole life to the study, say, of ancient Egyptian civilization or the culture and the languages of the Middle and Far East. Is it then conceivable that India, which has even now about 40 million Muslims and a thousand years' cultural association with Islam, will eschew the study of Islamic culture? Or that Pakistan—till yesterday a part of Indian polity and still a co-sharer in Indian culture and history, whatever its ill-advised revivalists may for the time being believe—will ignore the study of the great cultural wealth of her next door and most important neighbour? No, one cannot contemplate this as a reasonable possibility. I am hopeful that, when the fit

of communal madness that has overtaken many persons in India and Pakistan passes away—it may be soon or it may be late—the essentially hospitable and assimilative genius of India will reassert itself here and the broadminded humanism of Islam assert itself in Pakistan and the process of cultural contact and interaction, which has been rudely disturbed by recent happenings, will continue along its appointed course.

VIII

CULTURE *v.* PREJUDICE

IN SOME of the preceding chapters, I have discussed certain cultural issues, pertaining to India or Asia or Islam but have taken the concept of "culture" and its precise connotation for granted. It would be worth while to give some thought to what *culture* essentially means and I would like to develop the thesis that there is a basic antagonism between Culture and Prejudice—prejudice in all its varied and ugly manifestations.

In some circles in India there is a feeling that, with the establishment of a National Government, the main difficulties in the way of achieving a national and cultural unity have been removed. I am not inclined to share that undue optimism. So long as we were engaged in the grim struggle for our political freedom, the struggle itself provided a rallying point, so much so that at some stages we were able to achieve complete unity of effort and outlook and, even when there were lapses, due to the provocation of communal feelings, they did not—except in the recent tragic years—materially affect the powerful drive of the political movement. It was not that differences and prejudices did not exist—they were there, some dating back to the distant past like the problem of untouchability, others more recent like the Hindu-Muslim tension which had been fanned by political as well as economic factors. But they were held in check; for, generally speaking, people realized that their energies must be primarily devoted to the overall objective of achieving national freedom. Now that that freedom has been won, the unity forged on the anvil of a common opposition has broken down and all kinds of regional, provincial, sectarian, communal, linguistic and cultural conflicts and prejudices have come to the forefront.

If we are to guard the treasure of our freedom and to use it for building up the 'good life' in our country, it is essential for us to reconcile and transcend these conflicts, to resolve these prejudices and thus ensure that all sections of our people and all strands of our thought and culture are enabled to contribute to the material progress and spiritual enrichment of the country.

It is perhaps necessary as a background to this discussion to state a few fundamental propositions clearly. To some people, whose thinking has not become warped and distorted by the psychological poison generated by recent happenings, these may appear almost self-evident; to others they would appear to be entirely unacceptable and out of date. Our problem is to win back the latter to reason and sanity and it is to them really that this analysis of the relationship between Culture and Prejudice is primarily addressed.

In the first place, we should recognize, frankly and without mental reservation, that there is nothing wrong or criminal or shameful or weak in a nation having people with different languages or forms of dress or types of food or belonging to different religions or races. Variety, under proper conditions, is a source of strength and enrichment, not of weakness or poverty, and one of the greatest problems facing the world, and big countries like India, is to work out a mental reorientation and a pattern of social and political life which would stop these perfectly healthy differences from breaking out into conflicts and antagonisms. The unity that we want to achieve does not mean uniformity, a levelling down or ironing out of all differences such as a totalitarian regime aspires to do. No, it is to be a unity-in-diversity, a pattern of many shades and textures, a music of many different notes. On the intellectual plane, it is always the clash and contact of different ideas that leads to new developments; on the cultural plane, it is the confluence of different traditions in arts and crafts and literature and music that enriches culture and creates new forms; on the social and political plane, it is the spirit of experimentation, of accepting new ideas and ways of life, of trying new theories derived from different sources that

ensures progress. So, any attempt to stifle differences, whether in art or literature, or forms of social and political life or religion and philosophy is treachery to the future of the country as well as the future of the human race.

In the second place, we must realize—as I have repeatedly pointed out—that, historically, the genius of India at its best has been assimilative and receptive. Its tradition has been that of the open mind, welcoming whatever contributions have come to it from different races and religions or regional and cultural groups. From the time of the Aryans to the days of the British, it has tried to assimilate within its culture and civilization elements of value that have come within its reach from the four corners of the world. In fact, as many of our great writers and thinkers have pointed out, it is only when Indians have kept the windows of their hearts and minds open that they have been most creative and progressive and, whenever they have tended to become exclusive, dominated by prejudice and intolerance, those have been periods of national decadence and decline. So, in advocating this open-hearted and receptive approach in cultural as well as socio-political life, one takes *not* a revolutionary or heretical view but one that is in harmony with our national genius and the trend of our historical development. The people in the dock are really those who advocate or indulge in dreams of an exclusive cultural revivalism which would intolerantly reject the great gifts which, say, the civilization of Islam or the civilization of the West has brought to India and who hanker after an ancient and *exclusive* "Hindu" way of life which is gone beyond recall. Likewise, people in Pakistan, who wish to reject the great contributions they have received from a thousand years of contact with the rich Hindu element in Indian civilization and culture, are trying vainly and foolishly to reverse the historic process—an effort which would be harmful to their own development. It is not only the genius of Indian culture and the genius of Hinduism and Islam which revolt against such a mentality but the entire trend of modern history is against it. No group or nation can afford to withdraw itself into a tower of seclusion, for the forces that are shaping

and moulding our life are universal in their scope and cannot be ignored and, to the extent that any people may succeed in ignoring them or not benefiting from them, they are only working for their own impoverishment.

In the third place, we must clearly realize that a number of things have happened in India in recent decades which have made the situation acute and critical. The foreign Government tried, as any other alien Government would have done, to see that communal differences were kept alive. It is a tribute to their manœuvring skill—but none to our intelligence!—that we fell an easy prey to these machinations and actively contributed to the objective that the Government had in mind. The growing conflict amongst the various communities, particularly the Hindus and Muslims, culminated in the demand for Pakistan and the final partition which cut the organic unity of the country into two and reversed a centuries' old historic process. If this partition had solved the Hindu-Muslim problem and established cordial and co-operative relations between the two newly created dominions, perhaps partition would not be too high a price to pay for it. After all, Canada and U. S. A. exist as friendly and co-operative nations and they are none the worse for being separate nations. But this hope has not come true. Partition had a blood bath at its very birth and the rioting, disorder and migrations that followed, on a scale unprecedented in the history of the world, led to such an accentuation of bitterness and deepening of prejudices that, in some parts of both dominions, it became almost impossible for people of certain communities to live with any sense of security and freedom. The refugees of both dominions, who have suffered untold privations and sorrows, have created a psychological problem of great gravity not only as between the two dominions but also for the new countries of their adoption. Many of them have acquired a distorted outlook, based on misunderstanding and prejudice, which not only colours their own judgments but also affects by contagion the ideas and behaviour of the rest of their countrymen. It is no use blaming them, for they are the victims of circumstances over which they had little control and the blame for

a great national disaster like this rests not on any one group or section but on all the people without exception. The fact, however, remains that this unfortunate conjunction of circumstances has created for us—teachers, thinkers, writers, administrators, social workers, in fact everyone with a social conscience—an extremely difficult and urgent situation which should not be allowed to deteriorate further. We must either fight intelligently and resolutely against all the widespread individual and group prejudices or these will overwhelm and embitter our national outlook and endanger the maintenance of our freedom.

Gandhiji, with his unerring instinct for what was basic in every complicated situation, had divined and diagnosed this situation correctly and he had devoted himself as earnestly to this *educational* problem as he had done, for three decades, to the *political* problem. He fought against Prejudice—which is another name for intolerance, narrowness and snobbery—on every conceivable front and laid bare its hidden as well as obvious inroads into every nook and corner of our national life. In its most aggressive and obvious mood, it had assumed the form of communalism. Gandhiji's whole life was a crusade against it and his martyrdom was the triumphant vindication of his lifelong stand on this issue. Within the framework of Hindu Society itself, there was that age-old prejudice against the "untouchables", those "children of God" whom an unjust social system had deprived of their most elementary and basic human rights. Again, there were amongst all classes of people, what I can only describe as *sacreligious* prejudices against religions other than their own. Gandhiji proclaimed boldly the ancient truth that all great religions are one in their ultimate objective—love of God and service of man—that their great teachers and scriptures are worthy of our respect and that they represent different ways leading to the same goal. He was not content merely with stating this dynamic truth but actually made a reverent and sincere study of the Quran, the Bible, the Granth Sahib and other Holy Books and insisted on the recitation of passages taken from them at his evening prayer meetings. Some people are apt to feel

surprised at his almost obstinate insistence on this ritual and his reverting to this question over and over again during his Delhi broadcasts. They fail to realize that he was fighting for one of the greatest of human freedoms—the freedom to welcome and respect truth and cultivate tolerance—and was concerned with safeguarding the dignity and decency of the spirit of man against the onslaught of irreligious fanaticism. Again, he carried on a magnificent crusade against intolerance on the language front and his advocacy of Hindustani as a common language was a declaration of his faith in a composite, many-sided culture and a composite language as an expression of that culture. All those, who have been raising the slogan of cultural revivalism in India or of a common language which would harken back to Sanskrit and refuse to recognize the enrichment as well as simplification which it has received from Persian, Arabic, Urdu and English and the many other regional languages and dialects of the masses, are trying to set back the hands of the clock of time. They may not be able eventually to arrest the flow of time but it is quite likely that they will do great mental damage to themselves in this process of reaction. Gandhiji was, likewise, a believer in Indian unity and he completely rejected the claims of regions and provinces to restrict his loyalty—he never lent his support to any movement which sponsored a Bengali or Punjabi or Maharashtrian or South Indian patriotism *as against* loyalty to India and her true genius as a reconciler of differences. Through his whole life and more specifically through his scheme of Basic Education, he sought to break down the prejudice against manual labour and to bring about a rapprochement between manual and intellectual workers. Thus, one by one, the various idols of prejudice were shattered by the iconoclastic tolerance and humanism of Mahatma Gandhi.

I have referred to his achievements in this field because these are precisely the problems which we have to tackle. He wrestled with them all his life but his countrymen were so preoccupied with the political issue and he had so many problems on hand that he could not bring about the psycho-

logical revolution which was always near his heart. And later the happenings, to which I have referred above, managed to undo a good deal of the great work he had done. When people talk of Gandhiji's constructive work, they refer mainly to his practical schemes like Charkha Sangh, Talimi Sangh, and Kasturba Trust activities but, to my mind, his most significant constructive work lay in the domain of the human mind where he was anxious to liquidate prejudices and build up a new set of attitudes and values, which will centre round the concept of the dignity of man and reject the discriminations made amongst human beings on grounds of caste or creed or race or language or sex, and Brahmin and Harijan, Hindu and Muslim, Indian and British, Punjabi and Bengali, Hindi-walas and Urdu-walas, men and women, would all be welcome as members of one great human family. The fight against Prejudice is a fight to bring about this urgent but difficult mental transformation.

I do not know whether many of us have a clear idea of how deep is the hold that blind prejudice has got on our minds. Take, as one instance, the question of language. Those who have any knowledge whatever of the history of languages know that Urdu is one of the richest languages in India and in some branches of literature like poetry, it can hold its own, in quality, with any language of the world. And it is just as truly and genuinely Indian as Sanskrit or Bengali or Hindi or Malayalam. But, as Urdu had developed during the Muslim period and languages like Persian and Arabic had contributed to its enrichment, many people who were caught up in the political conflict between Hindus and Muslims extended their hostility to the Urdu language also. They have been trying their best, some of them unwittingly, to impoverish the country's culture by denying all support and patronage to this language, by even denying—believe it or not!—that there is such a language as Urdu! And prejudice is so blind that even stark ignorance sometimes passes for scholarship and is accepted uncritically. In their partisanship of an untenable thesis, they forget that not only Urdu but Hindi and Bengali and many other Indian languages developed a great deal

during the Muslim period, that like them it is spoken without discrimination by Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others, that not only Urdu but Gujarati and Marathi and Hindi and Bengali also have been enriched by an admixture of Arabic and Persian words to varying degrees, that in Urdu forty-two out of fifty-five thousand words are Hindi words or words of Sanskrit origin! All this they do not see or hear or acknowledge—a new version of "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil"! There is a kind of witch-hunt for words of "foreign" origin and a reversion to old and obsolete forms of current words. Now, all this is a source of literary impoverishment, a kind of cultural suicide which only stark Prejudice can present in the garb of patriotism or cultural renaissance. I am not referring now to the question of the common language and the controversy which went on between the advocates of Hindi and Hindustani about the name and the contents of the common language. I cite this as an example of how Prejudice can make people deny to a language of the country the support and status due to it as a part of the cultural heritage of the nation. And what applies more emphatically to this particular controversy applies in a lesser, but no less unpleasant, degree to the other controversies on the language front—say, between the North and the South, or between the regional languages in the provinces of Bombay and Punjab and Bihar. There was also the undignified controversy over the numerals which almost wrecked the unity of the greatest political party in the country! I refer to these language controversies at some length because they mirror the absurdity as well as the menace of Prejudices most clearly. There is no division of spoils or property here, no real political or economic issue, no clash of class interests—one would have thought that it was the most obvious thing in the world to give groups of people the freedom to speak and write and generally use their own languages, to give the greatest encouragement to them to learn other languages and not to use any kind of veiled or unveiled force to deprive even a single person of what is literally his birthright. But even this most elementary and elemental human right has given

rise to furious controversies, and these will not be set to rest till we cultivate tolerance and breadth of mind and regard every single language as a tributary to the wealth of our culture and literature. This would not imply any loss of unity, but only a loss of uniformity which is an entirely different thing! A common national language exists in a basic form and it will grow and develop, not at the point of any constitutional bayonet but as a result of the intermingling of groups and peoples, of the multiplication of contacts, of the mutual inter-penetration of their several languages. Let the common language be taught in schools by all means but not so as to supplant the mother tongue or regional or provincial languages. Let it make its way into people's hearts through its growing literary power and influence and intrinsic merit. Let it gradually find its place in the services and administration, but without undue hurry, so that no part of the country may feel that it has been deliberately handicapped. Let it wend its way into the Universities, gently replacing English by stages but without lowering standards or creating academic confusion. But, in any and every case, force is to be avoided which is evil in politics but suicidal and immoral in the field of culture; for, bending and breaking the mind is infinitely worse than bending and breaking the body! And we should remember that so much prestige attaches, almost inevitably, to the State language and the language of administration that the objects which its advocates have in mind—unity, facility of inter-provincial intercourse, development of a common outlook—will be inevitably achieved in due course.

What I have said about a common language applies to all the other common features in national life—food and dress, art and music, social customs and practices. At least, the underlying principle is the same. If these things develop naturally and spontaneously, as a result of a common system of education and a growing common outlook, they have certain advantages. But I would not dream of prescribing common food or dress or customs or manners as the means for achieving a common nationhood or removing prejudices. In the first place, is it in the interest of developing a rich and interesting

pattern of life to have all people eating the same kind of food, wearing the same kind of dress, singing the same songs, speaking the same language and reacting to various everyday situations in an identical manner? Frankly, I should find such a pattern of life dull and uninviting in the extreme. But there is a deeper reason still why we should not subscribe to the view that common food and dress, etc. are essential for a common nationhood. People advocate them because they think that without these props the differences and conflicts which exist amongst various groups and communities, will not disappear. To me, it is a very superficial view, negating that true tolerance which accepts and transcends differences instead of trying to abolish them. It amounts in effect to saying "If people look alike and dress alike and behave alike and their differences are at least not apparent, they will tolerate one another". But that is no true tolerance, for tolerance is always tolerance of something *different*, whether in details or in fundamentals. It is knowing that the other person has a different religion—Hinduism or Islam or Sikhism—or speaks a different language—Hindi or Gujarati or Urdu or Telugu—or belongs to a different caste or group—Brahmin or non-Brahmin or Harijan—or has different political views—socialist or capitalist or communist or liberal—it is knowing all this and respecting these differences; it is knowing all this and getting on without malice or rancour or even passive dislike towards them; it is knowing all this and realizing that the bond of a common humanity which unites all of us is greater and deeper than these differences and that, in spite of them, there are certain standards of conduct and certain attitudes of sympathy, co-operation and decency that we must extend to *all* of them. It is only when such attitudes become ingrained in us that prejudices will really disappear—otherwise we shall be only tinkering with the problem.

It is easy to say all this—though I know how the reaction of recent events on the national mind is making it difficult for many people to say so and for some groups to accept this position even in theory—but difficult to bring it about, difficult even to say *how* it can be brought about. But one thing is

quite clear. No single all-powerful, short-cut recipe can be suggested for this purpose. Prejudices are often tenuous, intangible things like the spider's web with their ramifications into the dark labyrinths and chambers of the human mind and emotions. They often begin quite unconsciously in infancy as a result of the home environment and atmosphere, are strengthened by contacts in school and the playground, are carried further in adult life by the pernicious influence of the press, the political parties, the cinema and all other media of mass communication. It is against this powerful array of forces that we have to pit our strength. We cannot obviously defeat or demolish these forces—we have to win them over to our side. Since they have created all these prjudices they must combine to undo them.

What are the factors which favour their growth? There is firstly, *Ignorance* in the darkness of which prejudices flourish like a rank growth and we should do all we can to dispel ignorance of one another's culture and traditions and ways of life. We often know little of religions other than our own or even about other provinces and regions. In our schools and colleges, there should be arrangements for the sympathetic study of the great truths taught by different religions and the special cultural traditions and contributions of different groups and communities. This will, at least, ensure that we know something of the best that they have to offer and shall not depend on hearsay or the suggestiveness of a poisoned atmosphere in judging a great religion or a community or a literature. All men and women of prejudice are neither malicious nor unfair—many of them are only poor, deluded, ignorant creatures who know no better. More knowledge should be able to improve their outlook.

It is not, however, knowledge passively acquired that will do the trick—knowledge must irradiate our thinking and feelings and thus control our actions. This postulates that, not only in schools and colleges but also in what may be broadly called the field of "Adult" Education we must make use of all the effective techniques of intelligent propaganda—discussion and study groups, co-operative activities and common

celebrations, through which they will learn to unders points of view different from their own and train thems for intelligent and co-operative citizenship through the radeship of effort for common causes. I should like to comn to you a very interesting account of an organized successful experiment to liquidate prejudices that had ex in *a mixed* American community, comprising Catholics, Protestants, Negroes and others, which has published by Barnes and Noble under the title of "The S of the Springfield Plan". It shows how schools, colleges, c the municipality, the radio, the theatre and the cinema be mobilized for such a campaign. The study of this ex ment should prove to be not only interesting but hearte for educators in India who are sometimes apt to be depre by the enormity of the task that confronts them in this fie

It is well to recognize, however, that even active knowl will not be enough to liquidate prejudices, for ignoran not their only source. Prejudices sometimes cloak deep-l economic or political differences, e.g. the clash between Brahmins and non-Brahmins is not a religious clash for belong to the same religion but primarily an economic between those who have and those who would like to positions of vantage and power. But the political gam always apt to call all kinds of allies into its service an present issues wrapped up in red rags so as to provoke anger and stimulate the solidarity of their own group. W ever prejudices are of this kind, they cannot be liquic either by honeyed words or by increased knowledge; can only be liquidated by *removing the root causes of conflict*, e.g. by establishing a more just social order w will, in fact, ensure equality of opportunity to all grou the people. And that is part of the statesman's headache fact, the whole of it!—and the teachers and writers can try and popularize this idea even if they cannot do anyt directly about it.

Another factor which can help us in this work is *generation of a strong public opinion* against the existen such prejudices—a public opinion that will not exten

countenance to those who indulge in them. At present people often demonstrate, in their individual and group behaviour, the most stupid and undignified prejudices towards other individuals and groups who differ from them in religion or language or social traditions or even the latitude of their birth! They can express them with impunity in their own groups and get away with it, because the others either approve of them or are too cowardly to show their disapproval. Now, it is not much use psychologically if a Hindu or a Muslim or a Sikh or a Punjabi or a Madrasi protests when *his* group or community or way of life is attacked by someone else—he is apt to be dismissed as a partisan. What is much more effective and essential is that there should be, in each community or group, some persons of integrity and impartiality who will not hesitate to take members of their own group or community to task and express public disapproval of them when they indulge in unworthy sentiments against any other group. It is only the constant exercise of the capacity for self-examination which can keep a group—or a nation—morally and socially healthy. When this spirit of self-criticism is dead and the beam in one's own eye appears to be negligible in comparison with the mote in the neighbour's—in fact even if the *mote* in one's own eye is complacently ignored—it is time to ring the bell of alarm. In this work, editors, writers, dramatists, people who produce plays and films, political leaders, social workers as well as teachers at all levels—can play their part by helping to generate a public opinion intolerant of prejudices. There is no reason, in the nature of things, why society should object more to a petty thief, caught in stealing some petty article, than to the man who would openly deny to others that human dignity and consideration which is their birthright and which they cherish more than their money or their clothes which is all that the ordinary thief can steal! Such persons can form the nucleus of a critical group which will serve its own community by insisting on high standards of integrity, rectitude and tolerance on the part of its members. This does not, of course, mean that they should not exercise their full rights as citizens to appreciate

or criticize all that is good or blameworthy in the life of country as a whole irrespective of any group affiliations. in the present state of our national mind, when group judices have run amuck, we will do well to recognize accept this special group responsibility. There is a categoı imperative in the Quran to this effect:

> "There should be amonst you a group which will (alw call the people to that which is good, instruct them tc that which is noble and refrain from doing that whic unworthy."

And in all religions, in the teachings of all great teacher mankind, all humane systems of philosophy and in rationalism of modern Science, it is Prejudice that is demned as unworthy and false and Tolerance that is ' up as noble and true.

IX

A PLEA FOR LINGUISTIC SANITY

THE BATTLE of languages has raged in our country long and furiously and, with the advent of freedom, new facets and problems have emerged with which the educationist has inevitably to reckon. As an individual and a citizen he may well be interested in the political, regional and other implications of this issue but, as a teacher he must learn to rise above narrow political, communal and regional considerations and ask himself: What would be the best policy in the interest of children's education and the release of the nation's creative impulses? Perhaps it may be of some advantage to state here a few fundamental truths which must form the basis of sound thinking on this problem.

We must firstly recognize—not regretfully but joyfully—the obvious fact that India is a land of many languages. This is neither a matter of surprise in a big country like ours—which has hospitably assimilated within its population many cultural and racial groups from time to time—nor a matter for anxiety. Language plays a very important part in the formation of a people's culture and a multiplicity of languages is a potential source of cultural enrichment. Imagine the wealth of literary material available in the various important languages of India like Bengali, Urdu, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada, Malayalam and others. They are all *our* languages and whatever there is of artistic value or social and human significance in them is part of the great Indian heritage, *our* heritage. The first article of our linguistic creed must, therefore, be the provision of the fullest and freest opportunity for all Indian languages to develop according to their genius. In theory, almost everyone pays lip service to this principle and hardly anyone will dare oppose it, except

perhaps a few who may—for communal or political reas(deny to a particular language even the right to exist! in practice, we find that a good deal of linguistic co which exists in India today is consciously or unconsci(based on the unwillingness of people to grant to other la ages the same rights as they claim for their own. Le however, hope that educationists are, as a whole, mac better stuff and they will endeavour to ensure that, stages of education, from the primary school to the Unive linguistic minorities in various provinces will enjoy the support and patronage as may be extended to the ma group. It does not matter in the least in what langua writer or a poet or a thinker or a journalist expresses hir If he does so with sincerity and grace and what he sa worthwhile, he is a literary asset to the nation as a w Education must, therefore, cultivate the capacity for thinking and felicitous expression and educationists must allow themselves to be perturbed by the fact that a partic writer expresses himself in Urdu rather than Hindi o Gujarati rather than Marathi. Nor is there any reasor apprehend that a multiplicity of languages necessarily s] disunity or lack of national coherence, for it is not differ(of languages that brings discord but wrong training ideology that break into discordant voices in different la1 ages. In a Swiss national celebration people carried ban1 bearing the slogans "Four Languages, one people" and "F Languages, one Voice!" Even if there are twenty langu: in a country but the people are cemented together by a nati(sentiment, they can still speak with one voice and be people!

So far as the question of the medium of instructio1 concerned, the Conference of Education Ministers held a years ago, under the guidance of Maulana Azad, gave a cor1 and welcome lead in the matter. In recognizing that mother tongue is the right medium of education at the prim and the secondary stage (under certain reasonable limitatio1 it has taken its stand on sound educational psychology. I also, incidentally, good political wisdom as it will cut at the

of the linguistic jealousies and rivalries which have recently raised their ugly head in several states. By granting simultaneously the need for a compulsory teaching of the regional language from a fairly early stage of the child's education, it has ensured that the linguistic minority will not be cut off from the general stream of the life of the people in that area.

While recognizing the importance of developing different provincial and regional languages, we have to consider also the role of a common federal language through which inter-provincial and all-India contacts can be established, maintained and promoted. During the last 150 years, English has served this purpose but this would not be obviously possible in future. Apart from other considerations, we must remember that we are trying to establish a popular and democratic Government in India which implies the participation of the largest possible number of people in the formulation of national policies and programmes. During the total period of its contact with India, English has not spread to more than about one per cent of the population; it has been the lingua franca *not* of the country but of a *very* small minority concerned with higher education, administration and public life. The new common medium must have its roots in the soil, must be the spoken language of a large section of the population already and it should be possible for the others to learn it with reasonable facility. What this language should be has been for many years the subject both of keen controversy and of serious thought. Gandhiji, with his unerring insight, was one of the first persons to advocate the claims of Hindustani for the purpose. He had pointed out that this was an elastic and forceful medium which held out the promise of further growth because it was near enough to the spoken language of the masses. Later, however, there were certain other forces at work and many somewhat unrelated considerations were imported into this question, which is essentially a cultural question requiring cool and dispassionate consideration. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru gave the right lead to the Constituent Assembly which considered the matter carefully in all its aspects. It has been agreed that the name of the common

language should be Hindi but it should be interpreted broadly enough to include what may be described as the 'Hindustani tradition'. There has been acute difference of opinion about the choice of the name but what is important for the future of the country is not so much the name as the *content* of this common language. A language grows and develops through the assimilation of new words and new forms which are in harmony with its genius, and its vitality depends on the maintenance of a living contact with the vibrant idiom of the spoken language of the masses. If our common language is elastic and hospitable, treasuring not only the thousands of words which it has already assimilated from various languages (including, Persian, Arabic, and English) but also congenial new words that may come to it from the language of the South and through international contacts, it will gradually grow into a powerful and polished medium for the expression of all kinds of ideas. It must, however, guard itself stoutly against pedantry and purism, which are apt to look down upon the language of the masses and insist on a rigid adherence to old and obsolete forms.

And, finally, what about English? We know well enough that the exaggerated emphasis placed on the teaching of English and particularly its use as medium of instruction have done incalculable damage to generations of our students in the past. That position is being set right now without unnecessary delay. But there is no reason why we should allow our just resentment at the wrong educational policy followed in the past to prejudice us against the English language, which is not only one of the richest and most beautiful languages in the world but one which has the widest international currency. It is our obvious medium of intercourse with the outside world and we should value it both for political and cultural reasons. Apart from the fact—which has been stressed by various educational bodies as well as the Indian Universities Commission—that the replacement of English at the Universities and in administration should be gradual and well planned so as to avoid the undesirable consequences of hasty action, we should see to it that adequate

arrangements are made for the study of English at higher stages of education. Till a couple of years back English was for us, the language of the rulers and, quite understandably, some of the resentment felt against the foreign rule overflowed to the language of its administration. Now when we are choosing it freely for certain purposes, it is as much our language as, say of the British people, and we should see to it that a country which has produced writers of English like Tagore and Sarojini Naidu, Gandhi and Jawaharlal, Radhakrishnan and Mohammed Ali will not allow its highest standards to deteriorate. India has a great and significant contribution to make to the thought and culture of the world and she will do so both through her own languages and through English. This plea that I have made for linguistic sanity has acquired a new poignancy in view of the acute and ugly dissensions that have followed in the wake of the states reorganization. Languages which could be regarded as part of our common cultural heritage, have become sources of discord. But, in the ultimate analysis, it is not the linguistic differences that are to blame but the suspicion and distrust and fear of injustice to this or that group which lie behind the fierce feelings of antagonism that have been generated. What is needed is not an isolation hospital for each language—one language one state—but a cleansing of the infection from the hearts and minds. This is, no doubt, an educational problem in the wider sense of the word but it is equally a political problem which is a challenge to our political leaders and statesmen. By their fair dealings, they must allay fears and create confidence.

X

THE CONTRIBUTION OF UNIVERSITIES TO NATIONAL CULTURE

WHAT IS the relationship of the University to the development and the transmission of National Culture? It may perhaps seem somewhat out of place to raise this question at a time when the fear of economic insecurity and the pressure of unemployment have monopolized the attention of the public and the leaders of the country. But this is, in some ways, the right time to strike a note of warning; for there is a growing danger that the objectives and aims of University education may become warped and perverted by an unwise emphasis on technology and excessive "vocationalism". It is, therefore, essential to reassert the primacy of cultural values in education and to show their relationship to the needs of vocational efficiency which are both strong and indisputable in their own place. Moreover, at a time when our culture itself is in the melting pot and we are passing through what may well be described as a cultural crisis, it becomes the duty of all who have to do anything with cultural work to assess its real social and ethical significance.

In order to grasp the true place of culture in any scheme of higher education, it is necessary to appreciate its correct meaning. The term 'Culture' has often come to be identified with certain literary-cum-artistic pursuits and preoccupations of the leisured classes which could usually afford to remain aloof from the wear and tear, the rough and tumble of every-day life. For them, it was a kind of 'spiritual monastery', a 'haven of refuge' where they could retire for "cultivating" their precious selves, cut off from all contact with the reality of productive, social work, which constitutes the genuine warp and woof of man's daily life. This identification of cultural

values with the limited leisure pursuits and interests of a particular group, coupled with the impetus which modern technological industry has given to the economic values, has resulted in the present confusion of thought which regards culture as a superficial excrescence, unessential to the real business of life. It is, therefore, no wonder that some intelligent and well meaning people seriously advocate that education should become sternly practical and not run after such chimerical objectives!

All the same, they are mistaken because they have given an incorrect signification to culture. The culture, that I envisage as the highest objective of our educational effort, must be conceived of as organically related to, and growing out of, the whole matrix of national interests and activities, as 'the ideal aspect of a nation's common life'. It is as essential to the fulness and preservation of human life as the activities that sustain our material existence, because it is the expression of certain fundamental cravings of our nature. But it should not, on that account, disdain or dissociate itself from vocational work or the normal productive and constructive activities; it should not seek its perfection in an escape from the warm contact of common humanity and it is not, emphatically, the special privilege or preserve of any particular economic or social group. The general trend of modern thought in education, philosophy and social theory is a recognition of the fact that 'reality is to be found not in turning away from the world of appearance' and daily activities but 'by penetrating to the full meaning of what is relevant there'. This line of thought, applied to cultural education, would point to the need for eliciting the intellectual, aesthetic and moral significance of the everyday interests and occupations of life and developing the mind in the context of dealing with concrete everyday problems.

The first criterion then that we must apply to National Culture, which is to be interpreted by our Universities, is: Is it an outgrowth from the major interests and activities of our national life or merely an external polish on the surface of our conduct? For, a culture can be a living factor in a nation's

life only when it has its roots deep down in the soil of the country—in its history and psychology and creative effort. This view is not inspired by any narrowness of outlook or the desire to reject outside gifts and contributions as unworthy. It is merely a recognition of the obvious truth that a people's distinctive culture can grow only from the creative sources of its innermost self, which are mirrored in its art, its poetry, its architecture, its crafts and industries and all the varied manifestations of its material and intellectual constructions. Viewed in this light, our Universities have a rather unsatisfactory record to show, for they have been on the whole content with teaching in a foreign language, thinking in borrowed idiom and even choosing their curriculum of studies and textbooks at second hand from the British Universities. They assigned an inferior position to the study of the Indian languages, Indian history, Indian philosophy and Indian sociology. Thus, their *alumni* come to look upon their own culture through unflattering glasses and developed distorted views and their adjustment to national life became awkward and uncomfortable. Instead of developing an identity of interests and purposes with their countrymen, they learnt to cultivate separate intellectual and emotional attitudes, and even their habits of speech and manners became different. Education thus became a dividing rather than an integrating influence. It is true that this sharpness of the division between the educated and the uneducated classes is being steadily bridged under the stress of political forces, but for that the Universities cannot claim much direct credit. They *must* now reconstruct their curriculum in such a way as to give the students a proper appreciation of the values implicit in the culture of their people.

Closely allied with this is a second criterion for judging the value of the Culture presented by the Universities: Is this culture working its way into the life of the people as a whole, gradually levelling up standards through a mutually beneficial intercourse between the masses and the classes which are specially concerned with the creation and promotion of culture? Any culture that lacks stimulating contact with the

ɜ of the masses, that does not penetrate into the dark and eary recesses in which their poor, barren and incomplete ɜs are being spent, is socially unworthy even though it y achieve high artistic and literary excellence. Generally eaking, Universities have been wedded to the limited ective of training for services and professions and, lacking gher idealism, they have usually turned out students who ɜ cramped within their own narrow and selfish interests and sessed by the idea of personal advancement. It has not parently occurred to most of them that, in the words of an nerican writer, 'the grace of their cultured lives has been tilled from the darkness of the masses'. They have taken effective and concerted part in improving the cultural ndards and conditions of living of their less fortunate fellow-n. The concept of social justice, which is the finest and st valuable fruit of true culture, has not become a strong tivating force in their life. But the curious result is that se more fortunate classes, who look upon themselves as ardians of culture, are now suffering from the nemesis of ir own neglect. The progress of science, improvement in means of communications and the social mobility which nocracy has brought in its train have so linked up the tunes of people that no class or section today dare live to itself alone. In the dynamic, organically interconnected iety of today free men and slaves cannot exist side by side, the free and the cultured are also slaves and suffer, in long run, from the ignorance, the poverty, the diseases and disabilities which stunt the lives of their poor uncultured low-beings. In the modern world we can either have a ly universal culture or no culture at all—a culture for cial classes, a culture based on any form of slavery, is a tradiction in terms! That is why our Universities must omote in their students a poignant realization of the fact t we are all members one of another, organically bound up, good or evil, with every other human being; that is why demand for social and economic justice, for a fair distri-tion of cultural and material goods is not a pious, sentimental philanthropic wish but an imperative necessity if modern

civilization and culture are to survive. Such a culture demands the inculcation of living sympathy, suffused with imagination and a readiness for strenuous effort, in behalf of a humane social order in which the essential requisites and resources of a full and worthy life will be brought within the reach of all and not only of the favoured few. Even a hundred years ago this ideal may have appeared to be impossible of realization but the scientific and technical developments that have taken place in our life-time and the effective exploitation of natural resources have brought it well within the domain of practical possibility. The stupendous effort at social, political and economic reconstruction which this ideal involves, can be carried out only in one of two possible ways. Either through a ruthless one-man dictatorship or party domination —a course which is obviously beset with grave dangers to human liberty as well as to integrity of the ideal itself—or through a radical reconstruction of education and many of our current ideas of culture and our social and economic relations. This postulates at least two precedent conditions: a strengthening of respect for all individuality and the provision of a congenial environment for its free development, and a rejection of the idea that the life of the spirit is unconnected with, if not definitely antithetical to, the business of our daily life on earth. We must rather visualize the body as 'the temple of the Holy Ghost' and, in the words of the Prophet of Islam, look upon worldly life as "the ploughing field of the Life Hereafter", i.e. the vehicle through which the highest spiritual values can be realized in *this* world. It is, therefore, not in the negation or renunciation of *life* that cultural values must be sought but in its positive affirmation and its permeation by the ideals of a humane culture which it is the business of University Education to develop. It is only then that people can gain the minimum requisites for a decent, civilized life and be raised above that perpetual struggle for creature needs at the animal level which gives so many of them a sense of the vanity, weariness and vacuity of life.

The second great contribution that Universities can make to

national culture is the releasing of human intelligence from the bondage of fear and superstitions and placing it at the helm of affairs in human life. With the development of the scientific method—perhaps the most important gift of the modern age—man has entered on a new stage in his career when he is no longer the plaything of chance or of the forces of the Nature but can take an active part in the shaping and control of his destinies. But the triumph of the scientific method and attitude has so far been confined mostly to the region of the physical and biological sciences where it has won a hard-fought battle against the forces of ignorance and obscurantism. It has still to extend its operation into the field of human and social relations which are dominated by primitive passions and prejudices. For, in their social, economic and political relations and group behaviour, men are usually governed not by rational intelligence but by the dark welter of their primitive fears and passions and appetites or by the inertia of old habits or the propaganda of vested interests. The establishment of the sovereignty of reason in the midst of this confusion is by no means an easy task; it is an uphill fight against the accumulated pressure of age-long habits, customs and the pull of mob-psychology. It is in the Universities, more than anywhere else, that a respect for objective truth and for intelligence, rather than brute force or irrational fears, can be best cultivated.

The importance of this work has been strikingly affirmed by the remarkable throw-back to primitive psychology and the revolt against reason which developed during the last two decades in totalitarian countries where, in the interests of political expediency, freedom of thought and intellect was stifled, where eminent professors and men of learning were expelled or persecuted because of their racial associations or because they had the temerity to speak the truth as they saw it and it happened to be unpalatable to the political charlatans at the head of affairs! The educational machinery was prostituted to the end of preaching and instilling into the minds of youths silly notions of race superiority, of the sanctity of war and the justice of brute force and all the

nefarious resources of modern propaganda were exploited to reinforce this intellectual tyranny. The Universities were thus denied that freedom of thought which is the very breath of their life. But the evil was not confined to these countries only. There are numerous, if less blatant, instances of political pressure on the Universities in the democratic countries also. In America the state of Tennessee banned some years ago the teaching of the theory of Evolution and a "witch hunt" was organized by the Committee on Un-American Activities not only amongst radical intellectuals but even amongst Hollywood artists and producers. In India a naive, one-sided sepration of education from politics throughout the British regime made much of the teaching lame, unreal and halting. In Great Britain, which has a better record of respect for intellectual freedom, it is not quite unknown to persecute professors who express political views unacceptable to University authorities. The case of South Africa is particularly alarming for all humanists, because there colour segregation, in its most revolting form, has been introduced in all aspects of life including schools, colleges and universities. In fact, since the great tussle between the democratic and totalitarian countries, freedom of thought has, if anything, diminished in the former and thus their victory has lost part of its real significance. That is why it is necessary to remind ourselves, again, that the highest function and privilege of a University is to carry on a fearless pursuit of truth and dedicate itself to the service of free thought with singleness of purpose and unmindful of consequences. But obviously only those States can afford to give the requisite freedom to universities for the pursuit of truth which are based not on the sanctions of brute force but on reason and justice. For, as Bertrand Russell eloquently puts it:

> "Men fear thought as they fear nothing else on earth—more than ruin, more even than death. Thought is subversive and revolutionary, destructive and terrible; thought is merciless to privilege, established institutions and comfortable habits; thought is anarchic and lawless, indifferent of

authority, careless of the well-tried wisdom of the ages. Thought looks into the pit of hell and is not afraid. It sees man, a feeble speck surrounded by unfathomable depths of silence; yet it bears itself proudly, as unmoved as if it were lord of the universe. Thought is great and swift and free, the light of the world and the chief glory of man." *

It is on the foundation of thought, free and unchecked by any laws except those inherent in the true logic of its own development, that the Universities must build the superstructure of national education.

This freedom of thought in the Universities—and consequently their whole cultural mission—is threatened from two directions: from the political side, with which I have already dealt, and from a narrow interpretation of vocational needs about which a few words may be said in passing. There is a school of thought in Indian education which seeks to subordinate the Universities to the demands of vocational efficiency and would like to see them transformed into big technological institutions or coaching centres for passing competitive examinations. I look upon this development with grave concern because it has a specious appeal which may well defeat the real objectives of the University. Without minimizing the importance of technical training in its proper place, it must be asserted emphatically that the University is primarily a home of creative thought—free to discuss, criticize and evaluate the problems and issues of contemporary life as well as problems of values and standards. It works on the assumption that the understanding of the world and of man through the pursuit of knowledge is an absolute and ultimate good, and that the application of knowledge to the manufacture of highpower explosives or processes of brewing is not part of its function. Even from the point of view of technical efficiency it must be remembered that the greatest advances in technology and machine-production have come through the 'disinterested' work of those who were engaged

* *Why Men Fight.*

in the enrichment and advancement of knowledge, unconc with the practical application of their discoveries. therefore, essential that the universities should devote · selves to the teaching of, and research in, sciences anc to the highest standard and should cultivate in their stu a respect for intellectual sincerity and truth, a high ser scholarship, an earnest devotion to intellectual and cu values and an active desire to realize them in their indi. and collective life. These qualities cannot, of course, be c into money at any commercial counter but their value, culturally and for efficiency in life, is beyond computatic

The achievement of such a culture, in individual and na life, demands two qualities to the cultivation of whic universities must address themselves seriously—na courage and tolerance. Much of the misery and unhap which characterize modern life are due to the dominati our minds by all kinds of fears which can and mu eradicated through a sound system of education and re-orientation. The fear of the Lord may certainly b beginning of wisdom but the fear of most other things— disease, poverty, social disapproval—is a paralysing which greatly hinders the free exercise of our personalit powers. The courage that I postulate as an essential ingre of a cultured character is not only physical courage—impo as that undoubtedly is—but also intellectual and courage which implies a willingness to court social approval and persecution in behalf of our faith and cc tions, and a readiness to welcome new ideas with an mind if they are worthy of our loyalty—even though may be in conflict with our cherished conceptions and demand their abandonment. How far, one wonders, ar universities fulfilling this function, if they lead their stu to concentrate their attention and energies on the sec of petty jobs and kill all intellectual initiative and cur by their methods of teaching?

Then there is the quality of tolerance and charity not only adds sweetness and charm to social life but indispensable, positive factor in any right view of cu

The qualities that I have stressed—a scientific attitude, a released intelligence, freedom of thought, intellectual courage—are all calculated to produce a democratic, mobile and dynamic society in which there will be quick changes and variations and a wealth of differing talents and ideas will emerge. If democracy, then, is to be made safe for the world and variety is not to result in the insane clashes and antagonisms which embitter modern life, we must strengthen the sense of tolerance in the younger generation and teach them reverence for human individuality. True tolerance springs not from that indifference to values and convictions which finds expression in cheap cynicism but from a deep and abiding sense of self-respect, coupled with a respect for the honest opinions and convictions of others even when they differ radically from our own. This is the highest and noblest attribute of Culture—this sincere realization of our intimate kinship with the entire human family, this attitude of charity and tolerance which is anxious to heal and reluctant to offend, whose magic touch removes the barriers which separate each of us from others. True culture is broad and inclusive—all narrowness is repugnant to it—and Universities can become genuine instruments for its dissemination only when they are themselves imbued with this spirit.

XI

IMPROVING THE STANDARD OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION*

UNIVERSITIES in India were established under a set of conditions which have ceased to exist and new conditions have emerged bringing new problems with them. The narrow and limited objectives that they had so far held are no longer applicable and it has become necessary to re-define them radically. It is true that, in spite of these limitations, they have, directly and indirectly, achieved some valuable results during the last few decades. You cannot bring hundreds of teachers and, thousands of students together for decades without developing certain academic and social traditions, stimulating research, provoking thought and discussion about living problems and even creating a new political and national consciousness. But these things developed largely as bye-products of University work, because *some* teachers had intellectual integrity and a sense of vocation and *some* students were earnest, interested in things of the mind and critical of the world in which they were living. Speaking generally, however, there is considerable truth in the criticism that their main object was to train students to pass certain prescribed examinations which provided an entrance to the services and professions. For most of the students, passing of these examinations—which means in a large majority of cases securing anything from 33 per cent to 45 per cent marks —hardly means anything more than the permission to affix B. A. or M. A. (even F. A.!) after their names, or to be eligible to apply for certain posts or to find admission in certain professional institutions. It does *not* imply that the students

* This was originally written before the Report of the Indian Universities Commission was published.

have had their mind quickened or their understanding deepened or that they have acquired any academic or intellectual or artistic interests, or that they can express themselves lucidly in speech or writing. It does not even necessarily guarantee that they have read anything more than a few text-books and notes! They do take part in some games and debates and societies—though many students are able to by-pass them too—but these were often carried on perfunctorily as part of an imposed or established routine and not as an enthusiastic response to the vital and manifold needs of adolescence. On the side of what may be broadly called civic and political education, the position was abnormal, if not morbid. Government, which controlled and financed the Universities, laid it down as a clear directive that students were not to take any part in politics and this had many curious and unintended consequences. In the hands of timid or reactionary teachers and administrators it meant an eschewing of *all* references to politics in colleges. I know of one amazing head of an institution who wanted to remove from the Library all books on "Sociology" which he thought meant "Socialism" and which he vaguely identified with "Communism". This naturally deprived higher education of a most stimulating and dynamic intellectual experience. Students were living in the midst of a powerful political upheaval, but, like the fabled Chinese monkeys, they 'heard no evil, saw no evil, spoke no evil' which implies an atrophy of the ears, the eyes and the tongue! In practice, it meant that the more timid students, who played for safety and were anxious not to jeopardize their chances in Government services, held entirely aloof from all study and discussions about politics and went into the world with blank minds on these issues. The others who were interested in politics—sincerely or because it was the fashion—were unable to satisfy their perfectly legitimate urge to study it and to talk about it freely amongst themselves or with their teachers. They were, therefore, led to take a distorted view of politics and they identified it with demonstrations, taking part in strikes and adopting slogans and catchwords as a substitute for serious

thought. This resulted in a general deterioration of discipline, which was welcomed at the time for political reasons but which has now become a heritage with a headache! The responsibility for this unsatisfactory state of affairs must be shared by the students, the teachers, the University authorities, politicians, and also, of course, the objective situation in the country. This is one of the most serious problems that educationists have to face if they want students to develop a balanced personality. Unless Universities are able to build up a high standard of discipline and intellectual integrity in the students, they will fail in one of their supreme objectives. How is this to be done? What are the factors which determine the quality and efficiency of the work done in Universities? I propose to examine a few of these factors which have a direct and practical bearing on the situation.

In the past some of the best qualified and most promising products of the Universities were drawn away to the Civil Services, because they offered not only higher material prospects but also carried a higher social prestige and appealed more strongly to those who cared primarily for influence and power. This naturally deprived the teaching profession—in schools as well as universities—of good material. I do not quite know how this can be helped and I have no doubt there will always be persons who will prefer to go after these glittering prizes. Perhaps, in a way, this is good riddance for the Universities, for we do not want our colleges and universities to be staffed by mere 'careerists' who are drawn to it not by their innate interest and faith in teaching as a vocation but in the hope of making easy money or cheap reputations. But it *is* imperative that we should attract to our educational institutions at least a fair proportion of first class brains who are prepared to devote themselves sincerely to education and scholarship, provided they can get reasonably decent conditions of living and, what is even more important, congenial and stimulating opportunities for work. This requires not so much a drastic revision of grades and salaries—though, in many institutions, that too will be necessary—but the creation of a new atmosphere of intellectual comradeship and integrity.

Teachers do certainly have, like other persons, their creature comforts to look after but they need just as much—if not more—something else: sympathy, encouragement, contact with inspiring minds, the stimulus of well equipped libraries and laboratories and the recognition of good work done by them. I suggest, therefore, that in the first place we should devise a better and more dependable system for the selection and recruitment of staff so as to secure teachers with some sense of vocation. The present regional, provincial and communal considerations which seriously interfere with fair and proper selection, will have to be eschewed altogether.*

Secondly, it is necessary that facilities for study and research in Universities should be enormously improved. I know of many institutions of higher learning where the library and laboratory facilities are so limited that even the most enthusiastic research student is likely to become discouraged and powerless to do anything. There is the incredible (but true!) story of the Treasurer of a University who, when considering the library budget, raised the naive question "Have the students read all the available books in the library that money is required to buy new books every year?" The fine encouragement given during the last few years by the University Grants Commission for building up the University libraries and laboratories is a matter worthy of special note in this connection. Not only should there be a generous provision of such facilities in all Universities, but there should be an effective system of inter-university exchange of special books and journals and the possibility that advanced students and members of the staff would be able to go to other Universities for short periods to complete their work, if necessary. It would also be advisable to liberalize the rules for study leave so that teachers may go out to foreign countries and Universities to establish new contacts and keep abreast of latest developments in their special fields. Another

* This problem is likely to become much more acute and will demand very careful consideration if and when regional languages become media of instruction and the field of selection is consequently narrowed down.

quite inexpensive method of encouraging and according recognition to promising scholars would be to send them out as exchange lecturers and professors to sister Universities in the country for one or more terms. This will stimulate a worthy ambition in the younger members of the staff to win a reputation for scholarship in their particular subject so that they may be selected for this distinction. It is possible that Universities may not be able to afford the expenditure involved. But if the University Grants Commission and State Governments would offer to bear, say, the travelling expenses of the teachers under these two schemes—the Universities concerned paying their salaries—the expenditure of a comparatively small amount will make an enormous difference, giving the teachers a new intellectual alertness and enthusiasm and possibly saving many promising scholars from falling into an apathetic routine.

So much for the teachers. What about the students? Emphatically the best guarantee of better work by students is the presence of teachers who are devoted to their work, interested in teaching and able to evoke the right response in their students. Given such teachers, there are many things which can be done—they are being done even now in many Universities but not in a systematic manner and not everywhere—to improve the poor stadards which obtain at present. Taking the academic side first, there is, as we have seen, far too much preoccupation with passing—often just 'scraping through'—examinations to secure certain jobs. There is far too little appreciation of the value of knowledge and scholarship or of training the intelligence and cultivating manysided intellectual interests. This is reflected in the pattern of the current syllabuses, in the methods of teaching and examination in vogue—and, even more, in the actual response made by the average student to the learning situation. He does not wish to read general books or even the prescribed textbooks. I know of cases in which students have taken their B. A. (even M. A.) degree by relying on 'Notes'—those predigested summaries of facts which kill intellectual appetite and shield the student from the educative experience of really coming

to grips with serious academic problems. At interviews—for the teaching profession as well as others—I have often asked first and second class graduate candidates to give the names of half a dozen good books and authors—in English or the mother tongue—that they may have read, outside their prescribed courses. And, over and over again, I have been amazed at their passing through college intellectually unscathed! I have questioned them about broad contemporary movements and forces which are shaping their life every day —which no intelligent man can easily fail to notice—and have often drawn blank! This shows that there is something seriously wrong with the way we are handling students in our institutions of higher learning. I would not be so seriously perturbed if their store house of *facts*, their information about this or that subject, were meagre. It is the lack of interest, of mental alertness, of the vision of what they are complacently missing, of the desire and capacity to learn, of the ambition to stretch the powers of the mind to the fullest—it is these things and the aiming at a low target, at the minimum that will make-do rather than the maximum to which they can aspire, that spell educational disaster. What can we do about it?

In this connection, I have no revolutionary proposals to make and none are really called for. Enlightened educational practice—in India as well as abroad—offers many valuable suggestions. *But they have actually to be implemented*—their theoretical acceptance will do no good. There is, for instance. the need for closer personal contact between the teachers and students, which is becoming increasingly difficult in many Universities—even in residential universities—which now count their students not in thousands but tens of thousands. It is, therefore, essential to lay down some limit for admissions to the University, as the Radhakrishnan Commission has also recommended, and to introduce an effective *tutorial system* under which students will have frequent chances to meet their tutors in small groups to discuss academic problems and the tutors will be able to guide their reading and check up on written work. It is only in such informal discussions and the

round-table scrutiny of students' 'essays' that ideas can be clarified and mental confusion removed. The use of a foreign medium, the system of uninterrupted lecturing, reliance on stupid notes, failure to read good books, have deprived a majority of our students of the capacity for intelligent thinking and clear expression. They try to memorize words and technical terms and definitions which are often ill understood and ill digested, without fully appreciating their meaning and without even quite knowing what they are trying to convey. In fact, many students are quite honestly deceieved by their own stringing together of vaguely understood words! Our teachers must fight against this kind of mental hypocrisy.

One of the most important forms of mental discipline—which should start in schools, and continue throughout the period of education—consists in training students in *integrity of thought and expression.* It is not only an intellectual, but also a social and moral asset. A student should, for instance, learn to criticize his own efforts at composition ruthlessly—from the point of view not only of language, but also of presentation and significance of content. This will only be possible after a sympathetic tutor has tactfully performed this surgical operation on his writings *with his own co-operation.* It is not merely a training in literary expression that I have in mind but a training in the supreme art of thought in the context of every subject and every problem studied by them.

Closely connected with this is the *development of an adequate Library service* and its integration with the students' work in such a way that everyone acquires the 'library habit' —using the Library naturally as a source of knowledge, inspiration and enjoyment. In many of our colleges, the libraries are disgracefully inadequate and the choice of books unintelligent and haphazard. Even in the best of the Universities till recently the libraries were not so well equipped and up-to-date in the matter of boks and journals as they might be. But what is worse still is the fact that these libraries—good or bad—are not fully utilized by a majority of students. They do not realize that a library should occupy the central place in an educational institution and they are

never properly initiated into the "library world" and its ways properly. There are many well-known methods of improving the library service, of bringing new and good books to the notice of members, of sharing one's love of books with one's students, of encouraging general reading, which any teacher with some imagination and initiative can adopt. No college or University without a library, adequate for its needs and size, should be recognized as a worthy centre of education.

Another great problem which Universities in India have to face is the fact that students are being sent out at present without that *balanced outlook* and general cultural equipment which is the hall-mark of a properly educated person. There is a certain narrow, unimaginative type of specialization which results in the Science students being complacently ignorant of art and poetry and social and political problems, and Arts students having no appreciation of how Science and the scientific technique have transformed the world in which they are living and re-shaped the problems that they will have to face as citizens of the 20th Century. Unless we can somehow cut across this division and give them *all*, side by side with whatever special duties they may take up, a broad general appreciation of the totality of their human heritage—social, scientific, artistic, and moral—we shall only be turning out good or bad workmen and professionals and not fully developed human beings. In this connection I would commend to the attention of the University authorities the proposal for the introduction of General Education Courses which has received fairly general approval in educational circles. The *liberal* tradition, which is an invaluable educational tradition, is today in danger of being swamped by the new and insistent demands of technology. Universities should, however, never be a party to relegating basic human values to the background under any circumstances. It is not *merely* a question of *adding* to the syllabus certain well ingrated general courses about the important problems of modern civilization and culture, but also that of *distilling from the various special courses*—in history, literature, science and other subjects—*all the general and cultural values that they have to offer.* It is

possible—and I speak from personal experience—to teach these subjects in such a way as to leave the mind and emotions and understanding untouched: to teach Science so that it remains a purely technical subject and its impact on life, for good and evil, is not felt and realized by the student at all; to teach Literature so that it boils down to names and dates and meanings of words and learning up literary criticism at second hand instead of being a joy and an inspiration and a magic glass in which human nature stands revealed; to teach History so that it is not a gripping and fascinating record of man's evolution on earth which illumines our vision but a string of names and dates and petty political intrigues which cloud that vision. All this is being done today in most institutions of higher learning and many teachers behave as if they were only teaching certain prescribed, closely 'walled-in' subjects and not educating the lively and eager minds of youth who are destined to become citizens with a thousand problems to study, understand and, tackle. That is why our education does not impinge on life—it leaves it unquickened and uninspired. University education must be quickened into life so that it would, in its turn, enrich life and become a means of adjusting the youth dynamically to its needs. It is, no doubt, easier to say so than to do it but no significant educational or cultural problem is easy to solve and the sooner we begin to think along these lines the better it would be for the future of education

Finally, I should like to make a brief reference to one other aspect of University work. Even if we succeed in raising the standards of teaching and learning and give our students a balanced outlook through a 'cultural curriculum', the University may fail to play a worthy part in national life. To fulfil its mission adequately, it must develop the extramural side of its activities and carry over the advantages of University education to the people outside its walls. Not only the teachers but the students also will get better and more effective mastery over knowledge and techniques if they have a chance to share them with others who have not got their academic background. Moreover, it will bring them into touch

with the realities of life around them and thus save the best of them from becoming recluses in their cloisters of knowledge or their "ivory towers" of culture. They will learn, as they must, the basic relationship between knowledge and social service, and their social and civic training, begun in the various activities of college life, will acquire a new meaning and vividness. A beginning has been made in this direction in some states where students are expected to do medical or educational work as part of the prescribed requirements for passing certain examinations. It is to be hoped that Universities will examine carefully the possibility of such work being done on a wider scale and in a more systematic manner and formulate proposals for its proper organization on a voluntary or compulsory basis.

With higher standards of scholarship and better appreciation of social and cultural issues and with the desire as well as the capacity to relate the efficiency of trained minds to social service, Universities will be able to pull their proper weight in the great task of national reconstruction ahead.

XII

UNIVERSITIES AND INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM*

ALL OF US who ponder over the state of the world today must feel deeply and poignantly conscious of the tragedy of the times through which we are passing, of the miserable inadequacy of the human response to the compelling demands of the present difficult situation, of the failure of education, including University Education, to equip men and women properly for their exacting role in modern life. In the face of this grave emergency, it is futile and unbecoming to indulge in platitudes or evasive rhetoric and those of us who have anything to do with educational policy shall not hesitate to express disturbing home-truths which may refuse to compromise with expediency. I propose to examine, in this spirit, one very significant aspect of the relation of the Universities to national life—namely, the problem of Intellectual Freedom which has become peculiarly acute in the modern age.

As we look around and survey our unhappy world, we are naturally struck by the unprecedented moral and socio-political *impasse* in which we are enmeshed and, try as we might, we cannot evade our share of the blame for the terrible state in which humanity finds itself today. It is easy, no doubt, to find many other co-partners in this guilt—the individuals and groups who wield godless power, unscrupulous men who exploit the lives and labours of their fellow-men, people who are in control of the marvellous instruments of modern science and prostitute them to their unworthy ends instead of using them as means for the enlargement and enrichment of

* From the Presidential Address at the University Education Section of the All-India Educational Conference.

life. But will it be said—*can* it be fairly said?—that political gangsters and economic exploiters and demagogues alone are responsible for blinding the vision, thwarting the mind and poisoning the emotions of men and that the more subtle and persuasive—though not always consciously directed—influence of education spread over a long span of time, has had nothing to do with the production of warped minds and distorted emotions? I am prepared to admit that when power passes into the hands of unscrupulous maniacs, with a "single track" mind—as in Nazi Germany a few years back—they *can* completely dominate the educational system and attach it, like a helpless adjunct, to their unholy chariot wheels. They can bring up a generation of youth, so effectively drilled and trained and "broken in", that their critical intelligence ceases to function and their generous emotions are dried up. They may lose the mental elasticity to see any point of view but their own or rather what has been imposed on their susceptible minds as the one and only Truth.

But, even after conceding this point, the question still remains: what is it that makes it possible for power to pass into the hands of such people? Why can the demagogue drown reason in a flood of loose and loud talk, magnified a thousand fold by the modern instruments of propaganda? How can the unscrupulous political opportunist lead millions of people—many of them highly educated—into beliefs that are not only immoral and unethical but patently irrational. Why, in spite of the most damaging disclosure, should the "empire builders" and armament manufacturers be able, time after time and with impunity, to sow dragons' teeth to their own pecuniary advantage and the nations be willing to reap the harvest of 'blood and sweat and tears'? Why should large-scale economic exploitation be still possible and profitable in an age when, in many countries, democracy has been apparently educated as to its rights and privileges? All these things can be possible only on *one* of two assumptions; *either* all men are innate fools or heartless knaves *or* education, in its larger sense, has failed in its true mission of releasing intelligence, quickening sympathy and inculcating the sense of

fair play in the people. I find it impossible to accept the first alternative—my experience and intuition alike revolt against such a wholesale condemnation of Man who is after all the end-product of the process of Evolution, presumed to have been made "in the image of God"! If, therefore, people continue to behave irrationally and unethically, education must, together with other social influences, take the blame for this catastrophe. My quarrel, I may add, is not primarily with the comparatively few people who are devoid of a sense of justice and other decent human emotions and who play with the life and happiness of millions for their own contemptible ends. *Any* healthy organism can, quite conceivably, develop plague spots, but under normal circumstances, it proceeds systematically to fight and eradicate them. I am far more seriously concerned at the fact that, in every society and every country, there should be millions of such confused headed, sheepish and credulous persons who fall an easy prey to these human vultures and learn to acquiesce, more or less placidly, in their misfortunes and the atrophy of their intellect. If higher education had tried courageously to develop the critical intelligence—which can weigh and assess and analyse and generally distinguish the wheat from the chaff—men would not have been taken in so easily by all the nauseating humbug with which the world is being swamped today in the name of patriotism, nationalism, communalism, imperialism, racialism and all other high sounding corruptions of thought whose one common object seems to be to divide mankind, on one basis or another, into warring camps and to demarcate rigidly the frontiers of human sympathy and understanding. If, on the moral side, higher education had devoted itself seriously to cultivating the quality of human understanding and stressed in all possible ways, the one-ness and interdependence of mankind—which science has established but prejudice denies—fanaticism, of various kinds and complexions, would not have been exalted into a religion, sympathy would not be an offence, nor tolerance a crime! I cannot help feeling that our Universities have not been sufficiently concerned with these fundamental problems of

Ideology. They have mainly devoted themselves to imparting instruction in certain curricular studies, envisaged not as dynamic knowledge which can remake life, but as "subjects" necessary for passing certain examinations which are conducted with solemn ceremony and in hushed respect! In the past, most of them elected to retire into their "ivory towers" and tried desperately to keep out the resurgent forces of the age from disturbing their precious tranquillity, on the plea that they were "purely academic" institutions, whatever that phrase might mean! And when the impact of these forces threatened to disturb, or actually disturbed, their sanctuaries they merely registered a feeling of helpless abhorrence, consoling themselves with the belief that the times were "out of joint" or that the students had lost both their reason and their loyalty for which they themselves were not to blame. Later, during the final stages of the struggle for political freedom, the situation became even more difficult and embarrassing because there was a division of loyalties and often the students and the authorities pulled in opposite directions. In any case, while one may commend the spirit of patriotism evinced by the students, one cannot regard the situation that developed in this phase as being psychologically healthy or representing the normal temper of University work. Now that we have achieved our freedom and also inherited the good and bad legacy of the past, it is necessary for us to re-examine the role of the University dispassionately and define its proper scope and functions in the context of the new India.

I submit that the University is *not* the *"Ivory Tower"* of the sanctified scholar but a *"Watch Tower"* for the scrutiny, the analysis, the appraisal, the understanding and the direction of the forces playing on national life. If so, it is the business of those who direct and teach in the Universities to ask themselves seriously: Why *are* the times "out of joint" with them? Why *do* the students seem to "lose their reason and loyalty" in times of stress? Should they be helpless spectators of these mighty happenings or face the issues courageously and take up well-considered and intelligent attitudes towards

them? Take, for example, the disquieting phenomenon of Colleges and Universities failing to maintain their hold on their *alumni* during periods of political stress or even otherwise. What is this difficult situation due to? Leaving aside the factor of unthinking effervescence, which has undoubtedly been operative in many cases, we shall find that deeper psychological causes have been at work. Our Colleges have generally considered the imparting of instruction to be far more important than the formation of right attitudes, partly because the latter is more difficult and partly because it might involve 'controversy'. They have not addressed themselves systematically to training the students' social judgment or properly directing their generous but often ill-disciplined emotions. Under the circumstances, they have naturally taken their ideals and their social and political opinions from wherever they could find them—from their haphazard reading, or their daily papers or their favourite leaders or any eloquent and plausible demagogue or doctrine-seller who could play upon their credulity. They are living in a world of dynamic changes and problems and it is idle to expect that they should confine their interests exclusively to "academic" studies which are, unfortunately, presented as completed and static systems of thought, or worse still, just information. If the Universities had satisfied their intellectual craving to know and understand the world and provided real and effective outlets for their idealism and enthusiasm and, what is more difficult, tried to ensure that these were, to some extent, "sicklied over with the pale cast of thought"—to give them poise and direction—they would have been able to engage *not* a fragment of their mind but their whole mind and personality. If ideas, convictions and ideologies are not to be developed intelligently in the consciously planned, but free environment of the University—I refer to *intelligence* and *freedom* deliberately in order to distinguish the process from "indoctrination"—impressionable youths will find them where they can and we shall have no justification for lamenting over their waywardness and irresponsibility. They ask for life and life-giving knowledge but *we* have been often afraid and

to 'disturb' the University atmosphere by letting in :sial issues of sociology, economics and politics, which ıt for and often decided "in the darkling night where armies clash". Unless we can give our students very ɔre than we have been able to—an awareness of, and ıess to, social issues, a critical mind, a trained judg- ;, above all, a passion for truth and social justice—we succeed in pulling our full weight in national life.

the basic conditions for doing effective work in the :ies, for which I wish to make a special plea, is for them the fullest freedom of inquiry and research ·ession of opinion on all difficult and controversial The Universıty is pre-eminently the place where such ould be discussed—calmly, dispassionately and with nour—and not shirked because there may be a risk ling some strong political party or some powerful nterests. The moment a University allows such ısions to direct its policy—and this happened in Nazi , as in Communist Russia, in Socialist England as in tic America and, of course, it overshadows our own ties too—its intellectual life is hampered and it loses gest *raison d'etre*. Where, if not in the University—in e finest minds of a country should grapple with the f thought—shall we discuss and thrash out, without heads, the difficult and obstinate problems of science, ', economics, politics and ethics which beset the path Neither the public platform nor the market-place considered a suitable venue for such intellectual ion! Where, if not in the University, can we learn t lesson that truth has not one but many facets and ɜrent people can work out their salvation in different 'hat in variety lies richness, and an externally imposed ty, which irons out uniqueness and individual differ- a sin against the laws of God and a denial of the ure of man? Where, if not in the University, will ɜnts' budding intellect learn that its primary function estion and probe and doubt and not to take things ted, that the *quest* is even more important than the

given truth? In thinking of the functions of a University, I am reminded of the wise remark of a great Chinese philosopher who lived more than 900 years ago. "If you can doubt where other people feel no impulse to doubt, then you are making progress." I am reminded also of the couplet by Iqbal, who made the bold asseveration:

> "Sell out knowledge and purchase curiosity—
> knowledge is presumption while curiosity gives insight."

It is the capacity to doubt and the impulse to curiosity that have always given a jolt to settled habits of thought and set the process of intellectual progress in motion. In one sense, the Universities are, undoubtedly, the treasure house of a people's culture and their task is to transmit this culture, solicitously, from one generation to the next. But in an equally true sense, they are also places where the best minds are trained to question and criticize and assess the values and bases of this culture "lest one good custom should corrupt the world". In the modern world, in particular, which is dynamic and quick changing the "single-track" mind is peculiarly out of place as an instrument of adjustment. What this world requires is the alert and quickened mind which has initiative and resourcefulness and can grapple with new problems and situations as they arise—neither naively embracing all that is new, nor lazily cherishing all that is old but weighing both in the scales of the critical mind. I am convinced that the development of such a mind must be regarded as the highest goal of University Education on the intellectual side. Let me, however, guard against the misapprehension that, in stressing this point, I am ignoring the danger of what is described as "over-intellectualism"—namely, that intellect alone can be an adequate guide in life. I realize that what Bergson calls Intuition and the inspiration that some of the finest spirits have found in Religion are necessary in achieving a balanced and complete view of life and its possibilities and of one's *dharma*. But my object at the moment is not to paint a complete picture but to throw into bold

ief one particular facet of the educational situation. My nt is that 'when a people lack *vision*, they perish' and it is entially the function of the University to give them a on of better things—vision which is, at least, nearer to elligence than to mental stupidity and sloth—and to guard m against the corrupting influence of unchanging custom. ere are many forces, however, that operate persistently nst the possibility of the Universities rendering this vice. Where "Big Money" rules the Universities—as in erica but not *only* in America—or the State defines rigidly boundaries within which Universities must function and lines along which they must think—as in Nazi Germany Soviet Russia but not *only* in these countries—creative nking, which needs freedom, is arrested, the voice of healthy informed criticism is stilled, and the rigidity of custom ready-made opinion overlays the natural flow of life and ion slowly perishes. Whether it is the critical period of r or the greater and longer travail of peace, we who have thing to do with the Universities must jealously guard our edom of thought and our right to judge social, political l economic doctrines without outside interference. We st resolutely challenge the pretensions of demagogues, of nlightened mass opinion and of the power-intoxicated State lictate to us our political and economic views or our social l intellectual attitudes.

f course, in making this high-sounding claim, I have umed that many, if not all, who are associated with the k of Universities, have equipped themselves worthily for role of intellectual leadership, that they have the intelli-ce and the trained skill to study and master their special jects and lucidly present their point of view to their dents. If, for lack of talent or mental integrity, they prove qual to the task, their opinion will, of course, deserve more weight than those of half-informed laymen. The vilege, therefore, that I claim for them is also a heavy onsibility, exacting alike in terms of scholarship and racter and suitable only for those who are prepared to lead llectually strenuous lives in the service of Truth.

There is one other aspect of the problem upon which I should like to touch briefly. I do not advocate the claims of the intellect merely as a tool in the process of successful adjustment; it is an equally essential instrument for the building up of that "good life" which is the end of all educational and socio-political activity. People behave with cruelty, fanaticism and injustice and above all with indifference to moral issues not merely because they are fundamentally cruel and vicious but also because they lack intelligence and imagination and what the Buddhist thinkers call "awareness", which is the fruit of quickened intelligence and sympathy. "Forgive them, O Lord, for they *know not* what they do!" "Not knowing" is as emphatically a cause of human miseries and sorrows as the lack of the moral sense. In the words of the Welsh preacher in "How Green was my Valley":

> "The evil that is in men comes of sluggish minds, for sluggards cannot think and will not. Rouse us with fire, O God. Send upon us Thy flames that we may be burnt of dead thoughts, even as we burn dead grass. Send flames, O Lord God, to make us see."

Now, it is only a few people who are fortunate enough to have the flame of a great inspiration or the uplifting experience of some ennobling personal contact. The only fire that we can consciously and deliberately utilize for burning out "dead thoughts" from "sluggish minds" is the fire of *Education* provided we do quicken it into flames and not treat it as dead ashes with which to cover up and extinguish the naturally inquisitive and restless mind of youth. And it is through education, inspired by a life-giving Ideology, that we can develop, as I have elsewhere discussed, the great quality of *Charity*—which is the touchstone of all true progress in human affairs—and quicken that all-embracing humanity which leaps across the frontiers of race and geography and creeds and shows up fanaticism and intolerance to be ugly perversions of the true nature of man. If, through our Universities, we can develop these twin qualities of a fearless

Intelligence and an all-inclusive *Charity,* there is some likelihood of retrieving humanity from the pit into which it has fallen. Otherwise "against stupidity the very gods are powerless" and when it is allied to narrowness and intolerance the results are inevitably disastrous. This issue, therefore, is no mere academic or theoretical issue. It is real and urgent and with it is bound up irrevocably 'the shape of things to come' in this country and the whole world. Intellectual freedom must be defended with the same unceasing vigilance as political freedom and it must be used in the service of a social order which is both progressive and humane.

XIII

IN DEFENCE OF LIBERALISM IN THE UNIVERSITIES

I HAVE HAD many opportunities of discussing with nent public men as well as educationists what the func University Education in India should be—men who, i: own walks of life, have made an undoubted mark. caused me considerable surprise to discover that tl considerable confusion of thought on some of the mo. educational issues and the Universities are often subjected to adverse criticisms on grounds that are tenable if exposed to intelligent analysis. I am no ap for Indian Universities as they are. On the contrary keenly alive to their manifold shortcomings and I reali their academic standards fall far below what they mi But this does *not* justify a confusion of issues or exc tendency to attack them on every conceivable ground, r or otherwise. In practical and political life, any stic be good enough to beat a dog with; but in intellectual we must insist on clarity of thought and on careful and formulation of standards and criteria of judgment. It purpose, in this chapter, to discuss briefly the criticisms which are levelled against our Universities elucidate what I consider to be their true function in life. I wish to put in a plea in favour of the spirit of 'libe being given its rightful place in the University—a spirit would give due consideration to the quickening of th the appreciation of values, the significance of disint pursuit of truth and the training of young men and for the broad and manifold purposes of life.

A common complaint that one often comes across

the Universities do not contribute to the vocational efficiency of their *alumni;* they do not cure unemployment; they concentrate on 'useless' or 'unimportant' knowledge instead of equipping young men (and women) to earn their living. There are, of course, historical as well as contemporary reasons for the particular stress implicit in this view. Indian Universities came into being principally for the purpose of teaching English language and, to a lesser extent, western knowledge to Indians with a view mainly to training government officials. So long as the number of graduates was not very large and competition not very keen, the Universities did fulfil the purpose of providing recruits for government services. During this half century, however, the number of students receiving University education has grown at a rapid rate and naturally the available posts have not been sufficient to accommodate all the young men equipped for, and aspiring to, the 'black-coated' professions. The Universities have, therefore, ceased to distribute what used to be regarded as sure charters of entry into government service. The situation has been further aggravated by various economic and financial difficulties. Taking all these facts into consideration, one can understand and sympathize, though one need not agree, with the chagrin and disappointment of the average man at the 'failure' of the Universities in making good what to him is their exclusive *raison d'etre.* What is regrettable, however, is that the better educated and presumably better informed men should have failed to detect the pardonable fallacy of this point of view and should have held the Universities responsible for a state of things of which they are in reality the victims.

This objection takes one of two common forms—either people run down this or that University for its failure in putting through a certain number of specially coached students through the various competitive examinations and thus having contributed a lesser number of civil servants and junior administrators than some other 'efficient' University. Those who were lucky or clever enough to push themselves into government offices—in comparatively easier times!—usually

favour the Universities with this sneer. Others who are anxious about the industrial and economic progress of the country bewail the fact that Universities are 'squandering' their resources on teaching Arts and the Pure Sciences instead of providing technical and industrial education. To the former the ideal University would be a magnified coaching centre where 'crammers'—that is their telling official designation—will put candidates for service through their paces. Efficiency will, of course, be measured with strict scientific accuracy, i.e. as success in producing the maximum of 'results' with the minimum of effort, without the danger of time and attention being diverted to 'useless' pursuits and studies. The latter are unable to distinguish between the functions of a genuine University and those of an Institute of Technology. Both are not only wrong in their educational view-point but also short-sighted in the pursuit of their avowed objectives.

A University is usually defined as a 'centre of higher learning'. This means that it is the one place in the matrix of a nation's life where creative intelligence can be freely developed and brought to bear on the constantly changing problems and issues of contemporary life as well as on the problems of standards and values. So long as University degrees continue, by Statute, to be a prerequisite for most of the higher services—and this question is at present under re-examination—Universities will certainly provide the large majority of government servants. But any attempt to interfere with the freedom of teaching or methods or syllabuses in the interests of any competitive examinations or the demands of services or "technical" needs is suicidal to that free thought and research and cultural activity which should be the concern of every true University. When students are inspired *not* with the love of knowledge or the desire for the intelligent study of human problems and the intelligent service of great human purposes, but with the hope of passing certain prescribed examinations, the entire object of University education is defeated. If the standards of University teaching are satisfactory and examinations are intelligently organized,

ɜ students will certainly take them in their stride, as it ɘ, but they will not concentrate on them as the goal of · endeavour. Otherwise it will mean that the educational 's and interests of a large majority of students will be ificed and their values perverted in the interest of a small, :e' minority. It will tend to lower the standard of true larship for the sake of a limited and mechanical efficiency ɔassing examinations and thus do incalculable harm to ersities as centres of intellectual life. This is what is ɔening now at some Universities and, unless the situation ɜtrieved by clear thinking and concerted action on the of educationists, this un-intellectual tradition will spread ll Indian Universities and 'crammers' may be appointed ywhere to coach the best students for competitive examiɔns. And who knows but that these 'crammers' may, ue course, take precedence over professors whose concern ot so much with coaching their students for competitive :ess as with cultivating in them a respect for sincerity truth, a high sense of scholarship, a love and earnestness intellectual and cultural values, and a desire to realize n in their individual and social life. Worldly success, iency in examinations, the admission to highly prized ices may be 'added unto them' as by-products; but they ıld never be the conscious ends and objectives pursued the students. That would not only lower the standards of uine scholarship but also tend to narrow their interests mental perspective. I know that this is a rather unpopular ıt of view to present—it is 'too idealistic', 'too high-browed'. I do not know where ideals and far-sighted vision are ind refuge in modern civilization if not in Universities ch are meant to serve not merely as centres of training for adolescents but as intellectual 'watch-towers' set up by people for the guidance of their destinies. And where, if in the Universities, shall we expect an eager recognition he fact that the understanding of the world through the suit of knowledge is an absolute and ultimate good?

. good deal of what I have said above also applies to the

other popular demand that Universities should, for all practical purposes, be transformed into big Technological Institutes. As one who is painfully conscious of the poverty and unemployment that harass this country and of its undeveloped material resources, I would be the last person to minimize the importance of technological instruction. But I do not see why this demand, perfectly reasonable in its own place, should clamour like a rude barbarian at the doors of the Universities which are *intrinsically* academic institutions concerned with the creation, the promotion, the scrutiny and the transmission of learning. It is within their legitimate scope to apply this knowledge to large human and social problems but they are not directly concerned with its practical application to devices, say, for tanning leather or manufacturing high-power explosives. In fact the growth of scientific knowledge, on which all technical progress and achievement ultimately depend, cannot take place unless there are 'disinterested' workers who will go on adding to, and enriching, human knowledge without being swayed or distracted by motives of immediate commercial gain. Thus an attempt to limit the study of abstract and theoretical sciences in the interests of a so-called 'practical' and technical education is not only an unwarranted interference with the legitimate work of the University; it is also disastrous from the point of view of technological efficiency and development. It is one of those situations where the straight line may possibly be the *shortest* route between two points but it most certainly is not the *best*. Short-cut methods, designed to restrict the travail of the intellect and relating all scientific research *directly* to industrial or military needs, harbour within themselves the causes of their own defeat. In the interests of all higher technical progress itself, it is essential that the various sciences should be taught and studied in Universities to the highest possible degree, and there should be on their staff scholars who are neither connected with, nor interested in, specific industries or manufacturing processes or the making of diabolical weapons of modern warfare but are inspired solely by the

love of knowledge. It is *not* their business to be always on the look-out for possible 'applications' of this knowledge, though there will be amongst them those who will make it possible for 'two blades of grass to grow where one grew before'. But this application is essentially the business of a different order of workers whose avowed object and duty it is to press scientific knowledge and discoveries into the service of human wants and purposes. The great progress, which Technology has made during the last two centuries, and the consequent transfer of wealth, influence and power to big industrialists have, however, tended to obscure this view. Many Universities of the world, dominated by the 'nouveau riche', who hold the purse-strings, have been side-tracked into devoting their time and energy to technical pursuits which should have been the concern of separate Institutes. The main criterion for the selection of University studies should be, as previously suggested, their human and cultural value and their power to release intelligence, to broaden understanding and deepen appreciation. But, unfortunately, in some of the industrially advanced countries, the criterion of a mechanical, money-making, quick-return efficiency has taken its place and the result has been the gradual ousting of the spirit of Arts and Sciences from its peaceful home, the University, and its defilement by a host of barbarous intruders like Chairs of Brewery, Dyeing, Laundry and the like. Anyone interested in finding out to what ridiculous extremes this narrow utilitarianism has been carried in some countries will find a study of Flexner's book: 'Universities—English, American and German', very thought-provoking.

It is imperative for us to envisage this issue clearly and unambiguously. Unless our own educational policy is clearly thought out and released from bondage to extraneous considerations, we might find ourselves following the same course. The view of University education that I advocate does not minimize the importance of industrial progress and efficiency nor does it look down upon industrial workers and their pursuits. But it does demand for the Universities an autonomy

in their own affairs and the right to organize their acade life in the light of basic human ideals and not with refere to side issues or immediate monetary gains. If the *alu* of the University can take the services and the industrie: their stride—and many of them *will* certainly do sc academic standards are high and earnest work is exacted fı them—well and good. But no one has the right to imp this measuring-stick over the Universities for evaluating tl efficiency and cultural achievements. They must be measuı ultimately, in terms of the richness and breadth of life wh they impart to their students.

The third criticism which is often levelled against Universities—and this time from the side of the politician condemns them on the score of their being cut off from rough and tumble of contemporary political life and carry on their academic pursuits in cloistered seclusion. In our o country where the existence of peculiar political conditi had thrust politics into a position of exaggerated importa the complaint was often made that the Universities wasting the lives of the youth by keeping them within shel instead of sending them out to partake in the political strug This point of view, appealing as it did to our sentiments patriotism and nationalism, often took in the unwary a politics, in the narrow sense of the word, played an undu dominant role in our institutions. Without entering ir political controversy, we can see that political work—in ordinary signification—requires a maturity of judgment, experience of men and affairs and a balanced outlook wh we cannot reasonably expect to find in the youthful *alum* of the Universities. Students are there to acquire and cultiv these qualities, partly through their academic studies, par through educative contact with maturer minds and par through that give and take of social and intellectual int course which always springs up in a well-regulated commun of persons with common ends. To divert them prematur from the educative resources of a cultured and invigorati environment—which a University ought to be—into t

political field or to transform Universities into training camps for 'political' work is in the interest neither of education nor of politics. It will deprive them of social and intellectual experiences of the highest significance and throw them into the political arena, half-baked, unawakened to many of the finer values of life and incapable of understanding many important issues and purposes. The political struggle no doubt places upon students the impress of its own particular education but it cannot educate them into balanced and cultured human beings. In any case, while there may have been some emergency justification for students participating in practical politics when the country was engaged in the battle of freedom, there is no similar justification today and the premature identification of students in their teens with certain political parties whose slogans and dictates they accept unquestioningly, is neither in the interest of their education nor of the development of healthy political life and traditions in the country. It is time that our students as well as public leaders—*whatever* their political complexion—realized that the mental atrophy of students, at an early age, before they can understand and judge controversial issues intelligently, is not service to the country but the exploitation of youth for ulterior ends.

This must, however, *not* be interpreted as a plea for what used to be glibly, and somewhat euphemistically, called the 'separation of Education from Politics'. Under that innocuous looking phrase is sometimes advocated a divorce between education and all those real, living problems of contemporary life the study of which is essential for every intelligent citizen who desires to take part in modern affairs. Some timid or conservative or 'safety-first' people would like to ban in the Universities the study of all vital movements of modern thought—of socialism and communism, of the theory of evolution, of great fiction which stirs up stagnant ideas about social ills and injustices, of history which has the temerity to tell unpleasant truths instead of being content with pleasant half-truths and convenient fiction. Such an approach will

destroy the University as an intellectual centre and defeat its true *raison d'etre* altogether. While, on the one hand, we should insist that the academic atmosphere of the University is not disturbed by importing the passions and prejudices which accompany the political game we can never, for a moment, countenance the policy of making University education anaemic, lifeless and divorced from reality, by forbidding the calm and critical study and discussion of the living streams of contemporary thought in religion, philosophy, politics or the social, physical and biological sciences. For the University is, I repeat, the one intellectual centre in the storm and stress of modern life where the requisite conditions are, or should be, available for the dispassionate examination and analysis of great problems and issues, unaffected by the temptations and blinding irrelevancies which make clarity of thought so difficult in this age of mass propaganda and unreflective action. While refraining from actual participation in the game of party politics, it should be keenly alive and sensitive to new movements and ideas, constantly evaluating their significance, rejecting the unworthy and interpreting those that hold out the promise of enriching individual and collective life. The proper maintenance of such an agency, jealous of its rights and freedom, and conscious of its important role, becomes particularly necessary at a time when the dominating force is either totalitarianism or democracy, both of whom may threaten individual freedom—the former through its policy of regimentation and the latter by encouraging collective mediocrity which tends to frown upon individual excellence. Again, the rapid and efficient transmission of ready made opinions, made possible by the new media of mass communication, discounts the capacity for original thinking and substitutes for it a uniformity of intellectual and practical reactions. Discussing this tendency which arises in modern democratic communities, the English psychologist, James Ward, had rightly pointed out: "What we want are new ideas to try our tolerance and challenge our attention, new ideas in every department of thought and life

in which progress is possible, new ideas to be received without prejudice or prepossession.... This is Nature's plan: with a single eye to progress, she takes all variations on their merit, eliminating the old only when the new is better and selecting the new only when the old is worse. Yet she does more: she takes pains to ensure that variations will not be lacking...."

That, no doubt, is Nature's plan, but, considering the stage of intellectual maturity that we have attained, we cannot remain content with the operation of Nature's wasteful ways, however beneficial they may be in intent. We have to assist Nature consciously and actively in this work. It means that it is for the Universities to provide a stimulating, cultural environment where this clash and contact of ideas, this reconstruction of human thought and attitudes may be carried on through purposeful endeavour. If they are content merely with turning out raw graduates with a smattering of traditional or modern knowledge or with producing entrants for the services, the professions and the industries, they will at best be an instrument for maintaining the *status quo* in national life. They will not provide intellectual leadership and people will be caught—as they have been caught in the past—in the whirl of changes which they do not understand and cannot consequently control. Nothing can arrest this flow of change which characterizes life—which really *is* life—and it depends primarily on the imaginative vision and the clarity of judgment of the Universities whether these changes are to overwhelm us like irresistible catastrophes or can be fashioned into instruments to achieve our conscious purposes. The ideal of the University, as I visualize it, should be the creation of a vigorous environment where the best and most creative minds will find a welcome refuge for their work of study and research and where a constantly renewed stream of young men and women will be trained as the heralds and prophets of progressive social, political and moral values. They will be engaged, no doubt, in their different and specific callings, but to the performance of all their work—whether social or vocational or political—they will bring a characteristic attitude

of mind—an intelligence that is keen and intolerant hypocrisy, a sensitiveness to all that is great and worthy respect, a tolerant humaneness of outlook which is a condi precedent to all genuine social service and a readiness active endurance in behalf of interests and causes that ap to their intelligent devotion. These might possibly appea some people as exaggerated expectations to entertain but my mind, that indicates a narrow view of education. Un the University can cultivate something of this attitude it fail to make the right impress on its students or train tl for the responsible part they have to play in the moc world.

XIV

EDUCATION AND THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE*

I

I FEEL honoured by the invitation to deliver this year's Annual Convocation Address to the outgoing graduates of the Amarsingh College. Such Convocation Addresses are generally a thankless task in the sense that they evoke no thanks from the graduates on whom they are so generously inflicted once every year. And I do not blame them. There *was* a time not more than forty years ago when a new graduate passed out of the College full of hopes and pleasant dreams. Graduates were not so common then as they are today and the demoralizing struggle for bare existence had not assumed its present acute form. As they left the portals of the College, they were buoyed up, not unjustifiably, with the hope that lucrative—and possibly *useful*—careers awaited them and the outside world was ready to welcome them and avail itself of their more or less trained capacities. During the last three decades, however, things have radically changed. The number of graduates has phenomenally increased and college education has ceased to be the mark of social or academic distinction that it used to be. It is no longer a sure passport to Government services which today offer but a narrow harbour for the flood of candidates that comes pouring out of colleges every year in ever-increasing numbers. Is it any wonder, then, that graduates who pass out of colleges today are prematurely weighted with the disillusionment and cynicism which are usually the 'privilege' of old age? And, is it, therefore, any

* Adapted from a Convocation Address at Srinagar.

cause for surprise that they are rather impatient of th well-meaning speeches and addresses which offer them noth but good advice and exhort them to the service of high idea Good advice cannot unfortunately be cashed into money . high ideals appear to them to be vague and anaemic abstr tions when viewed against the background of the dark a sombre or blood-red realities of life. It is all very well, t think, to talk of the "Good Life", but the "Good Li postulates, as a condition precedent, the satisfaction of cert economic and political wants which must be secured before individual or a community can strive towards the hig values which constitute the "Good Life".

Let us try and visualize, as sympathetically and objectiv as we can, the mental attitude and reactions of the aver Indian graduate towards the world in which his lot is cast world in which, till recently, he was deprived of polit freedom and which still lacks adequate economic opportun social and communal harmony and the stimulating influer of a well planned cultural life. Even more depressing is condition of millions of his countrymen who are steeped ignorance and superstition in an age which prides itself its widespread educational facilities and its scientific advan who are almost incredibly poor although the country posse great potential wealth and natural resources, who are obses with communal and sectional differences, often petty in th origin but always far-reaching in their results—differen utterly unworthy of a people who can look back upon lo centuries of decent, civilized life and traditions. Possibly, the case of many of our graduates there is not a conscio intelligently analysed appreciation of this harassing pict but no one can escape the conscious or unconscious imp of these forces on his mental and emotional make up. men too—like certain insects—are subject to the "mimicry nature", nature being in their case the social *milieu* in wh they live and move and have their rather precarious bei Even the economically well-to-do and the intellectua emancipated individuals are not immune from their rep cussions. They too feel the downward pull of the social m

struggling around them in poverty and ignorance, and they can adopt only one of two possible alternatives. If they have a sensitive social conscience, they must deliberately renounce their exclusive privileges of leisure, their selfish cultivation of artistic and intellectual interests, even the pursuit of individual moral perfection, and identify themselves with the cause of the masses without counting the cost. They must concern themselves actively with *their* miseries and their darkly lighted struggle towards better things. Or they may turn their backs on the ugly realities around them and choose the life of the "ivory tower"—and that is the path which the majority of such persons actually choose!

I would like to recall here to your mind, by way of illustration, one of the most glorious episodes of Islamic, as well as world history, the martyrdom of Imam Husain, because in some ways the lesson of that great sacrifice is particularly relevant to the point that I am trying to make. Husain was the grandson of the Prophet of Islam, gifted with a cultivated intelligence and a high moral character. He had a circle of devoted friends and relatives and his most dearly loved pre-occupation was the service of God and his fellow-men who had faith in his integrity and spiritual leadership. In the Arabia of the day, which the forces of tyranny and irreligion under Yazid had again transformed into a moral desert after the death of the Prophet, his small group of friends, holding aloft the banner of Islamic values, could be likened to an oasis or to a lighthouse in the surrounding darkness. Confronted with the challenge of ungodly Force, it was open to Husain to make a compromise with Yazid, to let him rule over Arabia—for Husain had no empire lust—and withdraw within his "ivory tower" of Medina, devoting his great talents and energies to the guidance of the spiritual and moral life of his own small group. I say it was *open* to Husain to do so but, given his nature and temperament, his vision of the issues involved, his unparalleled courage and capacity for sacrifice, it was not *possible* for him to adopt that course. Not for *him* was the life of the "ivory tower" but only one of struggle and martyrdom in the cause of Truth and Justice.

Not by cherishing his own life or that of his companion: a miser hoards his gold, but by giving them gladly in service of the great cause, could he re-light the lamp reason, decency and mortality which had been well-extinguished by Yazid. And he joyously chose this dange: but life-giving alternative! Why? Because *that* is the esse difference between the *'Alim'* or the servant of Truth and *'Abid'* or the devout man of worship. The former is a crus: whose vision and scheme of life inevitably embrace the wel and salvation of others; the latter is mostly concerned the saving of his own precious soul! The great Persian Sa'adi brings out this difference very happily and lucidl his well-known verses which may be translated thus:

> The man with the sensitive heart,
> Came over from the cloister to the school,
> Breaking the pledges he had given to his associates.
> 'Wherefore have yo chosen this path?' I asked;
> 'What is the difference between the scholar *(Alim)*
> the man of worship *(Abid)?*

To which he replied:

> 'The *Abid* tries to retrieve his own garment in the storr
> The *Alim* struggles to save those who are drowning!'

The essential difference, therefore, which stares you lil challenge in the face is: when you are caught up in a st what are you going to do first—try to salvage your precious garments or actively endeavour to save those are likely to be drowned? Husain did not hesitate fo moment to adopt the second alternative and, to all of us have a sensitive social conscience, there is no honour course open but to throw in our lot with those who are figh for social justice.

But, as we all know, there are people who do not hap to be gifted with the inconvenient apparatus of a sc conscience. They would resolutely turn their backs on pathetic and depressing social situation and either de

themselves to the all absorbing occupation of money making or retire into their "ivory towers" and give themselves up to the selfish enjoyment of their petty diversions or their literary and cultural pursuits. But consider what a heavy price they have to pay for securing this artificial peace in a stormy world, no matter what career they adopt. If they choose the life of the market place, their interests inevitably shrivel up and their spirit turns into stone; if they take to the artistic or the literary pursuits their "ivory towers" cannot harbour a full-blooded life but only an anaemic life, of self-delusion and futility. How beautifully and picturesquely has the poet expressed the same idea in the words:

Flash over the fields and orchards;
Flash over the mountains and deserts;
The lightning that frets and fumes round itself
Dies in the womb of the cloud!

Man's life should not be self-centred like the lightning which revolves round itself and fails to illumine the world. For, life can after all gain meaning and significance only when it is preoccupied with fundamental social impulses and problems, and Art, Literature and the other manifestations of culture are dead-sea fruit if they do not grow out of the exuberant soil of life but are merely the anaemic reflections of our narrow, subjective, transient interests. In an essentially unfruitful social environment, even the best minds—minds enriched with the creative spark—are foredoomed to futility if they become divorced from the pulsating currents of social life. Is it any wonder if, under the existing circumstances, even our intellectually promising young men feel overcome with a sense of frustration and resent the offer of unsolicited good advice which does not solve, and is *apparently* irrelevant to, their obstinately real and practical problems?

I started with an attempt to picture the mind of our youth but an inevitable association of ideas has led me into a line of thought which also throws some light on the problems with which our educated generation is faced. Granted that their

main problem or even their first problem is that of inadequate economic opportunity, our survey suggests that the situation is not simple and does not admit of a direct, *blitzkrieg* approach. Individual and social interests and economic, political and cultural problems are all inextricably bound up together and, like the vital parts of a living organism, cannot be separated from one another without irreparable injury. In the world of today, literally, no man dare live unto himself alone. It has always been true in a moral sense but the growth of science, commerce and rapid means of communication and transport have invested this fact with peculiar urgency. The great religions of the world have always recognized and stressed this basic truth. In the words of the Vedas: "Human beings, all, are as head, arms, trunk and legs unto one another." It does not mean, as some narrow commentators have taken it to mean, that they differ in respectability or that some are destined by heredity for the so-called honourable professions while others must always be condemned to 'menial work' but rather that all are equally important and necessary for the health of the body politic. In the Bible the same sentiment is expressed in the words: "No man liveth unto himself . . . we are all parts of one another. . . . God hath made of one blood all nations that dwell upon the face of the Earth" which gives the lie direct to the assumption that particular races like the Aryan or the Nordic or the Japanese were created by God in a mood of grace while the rest are an expression of his wrath and displeasure! The same sentiment also finds expression in the words of the Prophet of Islam: "All creatures are members of the one family of God" and, therefore, entitled to the same love, courtesy and consideration which govern the relations of persons belonging to a decent and cultured family. This reveals the identity of thought and spirit which runs through the teaching of the great religions of the world. In the words of a mystic poet: "All lovers of Truth have but a common thesis and belief; Their tents may be pitched apart but their hearts beat in unison!" The essential soundness of this religious view has been confirmed by the economic and

technical facts of modern life in an irresistible manner.

Thus there is no getting away from the fact that, even for the sake of securing one's own individual interests in an effective manner, it is necessary to take a broader view of the problems of life. The life of groups, communities and nations has such a closely integrated texture that their welfare can only be ensured if conditions are created which will secure the good things of life for *all* and not restrict them to a few privileged individuals or classes. This is not only a matter of social justice—which morally and ethically is, of course, all important—but also of enlightened self-interest which should appeal to every sensible person, even though he may look upon ethical considerations as sentimental softness! The problem before our educated young men, therefore, broadens out gradually and irresistibly from the purely individual to the social, from the personal to the collective, from the national to the international. Personal success has no substance or stability in a society unjustly and unwisely planned and even exclusive class or national interests are doomed to defeat if they are exalted into ultimate loyalties, impatient of broader human interests. This is what makes ideals, ethical and moral principles and considerations of social justice—even "good advice" about them!—directly relevant to the problems of youth. It is certainly their business to strive for the satisfaction of their material needs and the solution of their practical probelms but, unless these are viewed in their true perspective and against this larger background, they are apt to become victims of the "fallacy of the cave" which gives its dwellers not only a warped but a definitely unhelpful view of the world. That is why it is their *'business'*, in a very real sense, to identify themselves with all the movements which aim at the reconstruction of the social order on a just and rational basis and to equip themselves for the purpose in the college as well as outside. So long as they are at college, it is their imperative duty to study these problems with sensitivity and intelligence and to prepare themselves intellectually for the part they have to play in later life. Any institution, which permits a majority

of its students to pass through without quickening t conscience towards social problems and giving them capacity to judge the crucial issues of the day with intellige does not serve the real purpose of education. And, if experience of the average quality of intellectual and sc equipment of our graduates is any guide, we, who responsible for the present-day education, have little rea to congratulate ourselves on what we have achieved. 'l many of them *do* pass through college without reali: clearly the nature of the world in which they are living understanding the import of the forces of progress reaction, of life and death which are struggling for suprem around them. Their education centres round a certain num of "subjects" which, viewed through the distorting look glass of examinations, become mere collections of dead f: to be learnt—and soon to be happily forgotten!—rather t instruments for the liberation of the mind. That is why average graduate fails to develop a *liberal* mind wh educationists have rightly held to be one of the main object of sound education, or bring an unbiassed and critical ju ment to bear on the ideas, social practices and tradit: with which he is confronted. Is it not true, for instance, he is no less susceptible to the appeal of demagogic propagar no less addicted to the worship of narrow, class and commu loyalties, no more tolerant of the differences which make the variegated texture of our national life than the uneduc or half educated classes? This is a situation which sho lead us to an earnest searching of the heart and a revi: not only of the contents but also of the ideology of our hig education.

I feel that we should boldly take our students into intellectual partnership and confidence and try to make th education more incisive, more thought-provoking, more ward looking and more impatient of hyprocrisies and huml than has been the case hitherto. I find it difficult to belie as some people contend, that education is powerless agai the intellectual and emotional stupidities that beset national life—particularly the problem of group relations

conflicts which, in the past, has been accentuated rather than eased by our educational institutions. It is usual to attribute this fact, to the existence of communal or denominational institutions. While I am personally all in favour of common institutions, I feel that this explanation is rather glib and superficial and not adequate or fundamental enough. In the first place, there is no evidence to show that communalism is more rampant amongst the *alumni* of denominational institutions than amongst those educated in common or Government schools. Actual experience shows that both groups have been sinners in this respect in varying degrees. Secondly, such an approach to this problem does not touch the root of the matter at all and ignores important psychological considerations. An institution founded by the members of a particular religious community is not *ipso facto* any more objectionable than one founded by another group of people linked together by some other tie—social, economic or political. Of course, *if* it fosters a narrowly exclusive, sectarian or communal mentality, it sins against the first principles of education, which postulate that an educated person should have breadth of vision and outlook and his human sympathies should not be limited by any geographical or communal or sectional boundaries. Again, if such an institution does not permit the admission of students belonging to other groups and communities or employ teachers of other persuasions it deprives its pupils of very useful contacts. While I am prepared to admit that, under certain circumstances, it would be right to discourage the multiplication of such institutions, my contention is that there is nothing *essentially* objectionable in their existence. In fact, there are certain reasons why, under proper guidance, they may even become more effective educative media than the ordinary institutions. It is a well-known psychological truth that an individual can be educated through cultural goods which are congenial to him and which provide the most favourable stimuli for his growth. In other words, there should be a correspondence between the structure of the mind to be educated and the cultural goods which are used for its education. In one of his addresses, Dr. Zakir

Husain has stressed this great educational truth in the words: "All roads lead to the Rome of a cultured life but each individual must approach it along the road designed for him and his like. Education is nothing but the individualized revivification of objective culture." If this principle is true—and I do not think any psychologist would challenge it—it follows that the use of "cultural goods"—art, literature, history, social aspirations and ideals—peculiar to a particular group may, side by side with the elements of common culture, be excellent material for educating pupils brought up in its special traditions. I do not think it is right on the part of any person to fight shy of the valuable religious and cultural heritage of their group under the wrong impression that attachment to it is somehow repugnant to the spirit either of nationalism or of humanity. What is really objectionable is the use of these cultural goods—which are after all a *means* to the "Rome of a cultured life"—in such a way as to shut off the mind to the appreciation of other ways of thought or action or other forms of moral, artistic and political expression.

My study does not countenance the belief that there is anything intrinsically reprehensible in the religious or cultural heritage of the Hindus or Muslims or Christians or Sikhs or Parsis, etc. which enjoins upon them an attitude of exclusiveness or hostility towards people of other faiths. Perhaps I might, without conceit, claim to be a person with some religious-mindedness but I do not find that to be any hindrance whatever in the due appreciation of points of view different from my own. In fact, for the reverence which I feel for *all* human beings as such and the tolerance and respect which comes quite naturally to me towards *all* religious groups, I have found the deepest inspiration in my religion. And I am not vain enough to think that my experience in this behalf is in any way unique, not shared by other religious-minded persons. In fact, if I did not firmly believe that this is the only attitude which true religion enjoins, I should—in spite of my deep religious feeling—unhesitatingly advise that religion should be eschewed from Indian life and education altogether, for the tragedy that has been enacted in recent

:s in the *name* of religion is really too deep for tears. But, y view of the true meaning of religion is correct, we should our young men and women generously not only on the urces of our *common* national culture but also on the cultural traditions and the religious heritage of their icular groups. We must, however, take care to see that *end-product* of our educational system—the students so ned—possess the proper intellectual and emotional attiɛs, that they are mentally alert, socially sensitive and erely reverent of those great human values the service of ch has linked up the finest spirits of all the ages into a le fraternity. It is *not* a matter for controversy from what rce one derives one's inspiration for a life of service and ication—the devout Muslim from the Quran, the devout du from the Bhagwad Gita, the devout Christian from Bible, the devout Sikh from the Granth Sahib and the out atheist' from Rationalism or Scientific Humanism or depths of his own inner being. What *is* important is that particular attitude—of looking upon life as an opportunity service, as an instrument for promoting worthy causes—uld be carefully inculcated in schools and colleges. Other- there is the danger that their preoccupation with the ssing problems of administration and finance may drive the background the larger issues and ideals which give ıning to life and dignity to education and place these actical" problems in their proper perspective. Religion, ture and the modern creed of Social Justice alike stress service of these ideals and the primary function of cation is to strengthen devotion to them in the hearts and ds of the young generation.

we accept this point of view—namely, that we can do ıing right in the domain of education unless our general tude and approach to life is correct—many possible and tful lines of reform will open out before us. This will give touchstone on which we can test the rightness of our demic paraphernalia—books and curricula, methods of hing and learning, discipline and organization and all our er academic activities. Judged by this criterion what is

crucial and true will ring quite differently from what is insignificant or false. Books that do not give a true picture of the world, studies that do not quicken the social conscience, methods which arrest the free play of intelligence, discipline that does not lead to the goal of socialized but free individuality —all these will have to go. And education will welcome whatever liberates the mind, broadens the sympathies, sharpens the intelligence and makes the individual a trained and well-tempered instrument of enlightened social service.

II

I might address a few remarks, in conclusion, to the outgoing graduates in particular. You are, at this moment, at a critical juncture in your life, for you are passing out of the academic peace and seclusion of your *Alma Mater* and looking forward to entering the more complex, more exacting and more ruthless world of everyday life, where all that you have acquired will be put to a gruelling test, where your idealism, which is the most precious possession of youth, will be rudely shaken, where a life of compromises will be easy and tempting and a life of courage and integrity extremely difficult. If the college has instilled in you the right habits, attitudes and ideals, you may emerge unscathed from the ordeal. But if it has not succeeded in doing so, it has failed in its most fundamental purpose. Apart from the strength and integrity of character, which is the basic essential of the "good life", there are two other factors which will determine whether or not you are going to fulfil your intellectual and moral promise. In the first place, you should realize that, on passing out of the college, you do *not* cease to be 'students' in the wider sense of the word. If you have at all imbibed the genuine spirit of University education and culture, you should always continue to strive for the pursuit of knowledge and truth, for it is only through them, that you can learn to control your world, to win your *true* freedom and to achieve the fulness of your destiny. You should constantly ponder over the fact that you are living in an age

which is in a state of flux, where changes are occurring more rapidly than ever before in the history of this troubled planet. New social, political and economic forces are in the ascendant and new experiments in living are being tried. No intelligent man can afford to ignore their far-reaching import—he has to make constant adjustments to them both intellectually and practically. I would refuse to call any person educated who is so engrossed in his own petty concerns that all these vital currents leave him unmoved and untouched. And if you cease to study the quickly evolving life and institutions around you, there is every danger of your relapsing into an intellectual apathy and thus missing the finest fruit of your higher education. For, culture has been defined by a distinguished educationist as "a capacity for constantly enlarging in range and accuracy one's perception of meanings". I would have you cultivate something of the sensitiveness, the curiosity, the yearning for newer ranges of understanding and appreciation which is an essential quality of the mind in every true artist and poet striving after perfection, who is never fully satisfied with what he has achieved. If defective education takes away this divine spark and gives you all the riches of the world, you shall have indeed made a sorry bargain.

It follows from what I have said that I would gladly concede to youth the right to criticize the social structure and the institutions which compose it. Educators and authorities should really welcome such criticism, for it is the privilege of youth to be discontented, to criticize the existing order, to dream of a better world and to strive for the translation of the dream into space-time realities. It is, however, equally important for you to remember that criticism is an exacting right and involves a heavy responsibility. You should study carefully and dispassionately what you are criticizing and your criticism should be reasonable and soundly argued. You should so equip yourselves mentally that, when you are called upon to shoulder the responsibility for the better organizing of national life, which you rather lightly demand today, you would be able to do so worthily and successfully, and not pitifully repeat the failures and mistakes of your elders! Right

education should cultivate in you a combination of undaunted intellectual courage, realism and sense of responsibility so that you may not squander your powers on unimportant trifles, controversies or communal squabbles.

There is one other thought which frequently comes to me in moments of reflection and which I should like to share with you. How many of us realize, I wonder—realize vividly in our innermost heart—that whatever knowledge or culture or refinement there is in our lives, whatever material or intellectual facilities we enjoy, whatever leisure is vouchsafed to us for our literary, artistic or scientific pursuits—all this grace and light has been 'distilled', as someone has put it, out of the darkness in which our masses live their sorry lives? And I am often overwhelmed by the oppressive thought that most of us are apt to take things for granted, to accept our superior advantages as a matter of right, without counting its cost to others and realizing our duty towards those who maintain us in comparative comfort and luxury. Such a selfish education, which fails to offer something of value to the masses and improve their life and their ways, is worse than useless—it is economically an extravagance and morally a crime. It implies an attitude of dishonesty, of failing to pay our debt of honour to those who may be too weak at present to exact it from us but will not remain so for long! I invite you to consider—in the awesome solitude of your own conscience—how you are going to repay that debt and how you can make the common people participate in the cultural riches which you have been privileged to enjoy at your colleges and Universities. There are many ways in which this can be done. For instance, in this 20th century of ours, an ignorant and illiterate electorate is a great danger which should not only prick the civic conscience of those who govern the destinies of the country but also challenge the patriotism of our educated youth. Will you continue to cherish your intellectual snobbery and social isolation or strive to share with your less fortunate brethren what education has given you of understanding, enlightenment and social and civic training? To students of colleges, the challenge of this situa-

tion comes with a special poignancy and force. This land of ours has been gifted by nature with all kinds of wealth and resources—material, artistic and human—but, as I have already pointed out, the tremendous majority of people live a life of poverty in the midst of natural plenty, of ignorance in an age of knowledge, of disease and insanitation when science holds out the promise of conquering both. How long shall our educated persons view this bitter anomaly with complacence or unconcern? I have always been something of an optimist—not in the cheap and lazy sense that things will somehow come right in the end without our active and constant striving—but in the positive sense that it *is* possible for man to reconstruct this 'sorry scheme of things' nearer to his heart's desire and become the architect of a more just, more rational, more co-operative, more harmonious society. Science has placed tremendous forces under the control of man; what is lacking, as I have argued elsewhere in some detail, is the vision and the charity to use this titanic force for construction rather than destruction, for service rather than exploitation. The first point which I have pressed on your attention, namely, the cultivation of the attitude of a true student—mental eagerness and receptivity and interest in the quest of knowledge—would ensure that you possess the necessary *power and understanding* for the refashioning of your world. The second demands a living realization of your kinship and solidarity with your fellow-men irrespective of the distinctions of race and religion, colour and class. It is this that will give you the active *goodwill and sympathy* without which knowledge is apt to become merely a lever for self-aggrandizement. A combination of knowledge with vision. of intellect with love, will generate in you the confidence and the constructive power, which mock at obstacles, spurn the temptations that appeal to petty minds and enable you to follow the course of right and justice even though the conventional ideas and values of society may clash with it.

XV

THE ROLE OF THE STUDENTS*

AN ACTIVITY always derives its deeper significance by being placed in a broader setting and being related to larger issues relevant to it. In dealing with our present-day problems, I have always felt that unless we relate our thinking and activities—whether in the field of education or economics or politics or technology—to the broad concept of building a new world which would be a better and more sensible world than the one in which the present generation has been spinning out its miserable existence, our efforts will not lead to significant results. It has been my endeavour in this book to bring out, however sketchily and inadequately, this meaningful relationship of education to the building up of better individuals and a better society and to underline the conviction that it is possible for almost everyone, however small and limited the scope of his life, to make some contribution to the achievement of this purpose. No one is so small or so insignificant that he cannot try, within his material and psychological limitations, to bring about, at least, a change in his own self—his outlook, his intellectual and emotional attitudes, his sympathies—so as to help, and not hinder, the wider purposes of social revolution. And such a *personal* revolution is by no means the least important factor in bringing about the bigger revolution—in fact, many persons would claim, with considerable justification, that it is its *most* important part.

I have already tried, in an earlier chapter, to assess and analyse some of the most powerful forces that have been reacting on modern life all over the world and re-setting the

* Adapted from an address at the Aligarh Muslim University.

problems that 20th century man has to face. These have been operative in our own country, too, and have produced what can only be described as a critical and alarming situation. If education is to be of any creative use in this situation, it must reorient itself, both in ideology and method. It must particularly address itself to changing the attitudes and outlook of our students so that they may play their proper part in the shaping of this emerging new world. We have recently passed through such a terrible psychological crisis that it has left us mentally limp and inflicted grievous wounds on our sense of values. It is becoming increasingly difficult for people generally—and not the younger generation only—to know even *in theory* what is right and what is wrong. The scars left by the partition and its aftermath, the unholy propaganda that had been going on for years earlier, the problems that 20th century man has to tackle. These have growing fanaticism and narrow-mindedness which turned us away from the serene light of our cultural traditions, the pull of vested interests and intolerant ideologies—all these tended to mislead and confuse even the minority which has the aspiration to reach out towards truth and justice. The education that our younger generation has so far received has not built up resistance to propaganda or prepared it to think for itself. It is this critical moral situation which offers justification even for the rather boring attempt to offer advice to youth!

After more than a century of political subjection, we have recently achieved our freedom and this should normally have been an occasion for unmixed felicitation and rejoicing. But, on account of the circumstances that I have just mentioned, it has become even more an occasion for a frank searching of hearts on the part of all of us. Millions of our countrymen can recall how on the 15th of August 1947, when the country was celebrating the winning of Independence, the architect of our freedom—that frail man of God, who had laboured for it for over thirty years—was not in Delhi to participate in the celebrations, but was trudging in the villages of Bengal where, he knew, the good fight was to be carried on. For, the fight

was by no means over. He was thinking all the time of the other thousands of villages and cities in India and Pakistan where he, and those who shared his faith and ideals, had to wrestle with the forces of darkness that had obtained at least a temporary victory. It was a moving tragedy of great magnitude that was stalking the land. If pain or misery or loss or death come upon a person in the normal course of things, one may (and does) grieve over it but it is not a tragedy in the deeper sense of the word. A tragedy implies that there is a great disharmony between opportunity and achievement, between what is and what might be. It also implies that one finds onself caught up, apparently helplessly, in the whirl of forces which one is unable to control and one watches the irresistible drift of opportunity to sea. And all the time there is the lurking feeling that this *need* not have been, this *should* not have been, that this *could* have been avoided through collective foresight and planning. The Indian tragedy is deepened by the realization that the forces of reaction and fanaticism should have struck just when a vista of limitless opportunities was opening out before the country. And we, the people who pretend to be educated and to think and study and regard ourselves as the custodians of human values—we did nothing, or very little, to avert the catastrophe. Schools, Colleges and Universities, on both sides of the border, are almost as much in the dock for what happened as the men who killed and looted and burnt. For, they not only failed to stand up courageously and unitedly against the holocaust going on around them but had also failed to inculcate in the educated classes a mental and emotional disposition which could serve as a bulwark of peace and decency in a world gone mad with hatred and revenge. I know well enough that education is *not* all-powerful and its influence is largely conditioned by environing social forces. But the widespread breakdown of morale that occurred, sweeping millions into its train, shows that education too has much to answer for.

To Gandhiji's way of thinking, what was happening in India and Pakistan at the time was even more a *moral* than a

political crisis and, therefore, it was more dangerous and needed urgent attention. A political or economic crisis can be overcome—not, indeed, easily but with a reasonable degree of certainty—by adopting appropriate political and economic policies, *provided the moral stamina, the integrity and the social conscience of the people remain unimpaired.* But if this moral stamina itself is weakened, it is like loosening and damaging the roots of a tree—however magnificent and strong the oak may look and however carefully and scientifically you may support and strengthen its trunk and branches, it is doomed to wither and die. A nation or a community can live —in a decent, free, civilized and human way—only on the basis of its adherence to certain basically important moral values which provide the motive force for the social and political qualities needed for survival. Bereft of these values, neither wealth nor military power nor a high degree of industrialization can build an abiding and civilized state or society. Again, Gandhiji knew that freedom—the freedom *of man*, the freedom *for man*—is never completely and irrevocably won but is always threatened from one direction or another. It is the great heritage and glory of man to be an eternal crusader for freedom, widening its scope, deepening its content and guarding it from all threats, whether political or economic or social or cultural. If he had been living today, he would still be wrestling with the moral and the psychological problem, with no time for rest or rejoicing. We must ponder over this sobering but creative thought, because it will help to light for us the path of our duty. Till we can make this freedom, that has come into our weak and unworthy hands, an instrument for establishing the "good life" for all and transform our formal *political* democracy into social, economic and cultural democracy, our task will not be done. And this is an objective which is big enough to challenge the energies, the social vision and the idealism of all men and women of good will in the country.

What are these values which must be regarded as *basic* for our existence as decent human beings? I have referred to them in different contexts in the course of this book. If one

examines them only *theoretically* they seem to be fairly obvious and non-controversial, hardly requiring any advocacy. But, *in practice,* they are precisely the values which are thrown overboard in a frantic struggle for power and mean party and sectional advantages. As individuals and as members of the community, people need *charity* and *tolerance, reverence for human life and love of peace*, a lively sense of *human kinship* and interdependence, a readiness to understand and *respect honest differences,* and a passionate attachment to *truth and justice,* irrespective of where it may lead and in whose company it may land them! They need all these if they are to live together amicably and not as wild beasts in a cage—if that is not an undeserved accusation against the wild beasts! But when we glance over the last few years' happenings in the two neighbouring States, can we honestly say that, by and large, any community—Hindu, Muslim or Sikh—showed either charity or tolerance or love of peace or a lively sense of human kinship or scrupulous regard for truth and justice? I am not at the moment concerned so much with the ugly fact that thousands of persons descended to the level of beasts and inflicted untold misery on helpless men, women and children—in *any* country with 400 million persons, a small percentage might conceivably go mad if the seeds of discord are cleverly sown and it is fed on fanatical propaganda and lies and hate. What makes one feel sick with the sense of shame and frustration is the thought that lakhs of persons should have watched this orgy of blood and murder either unmoved—passively approving or conniving at what was going on—or too much afraid for their 'precious' lives or their popularity to denounce these inhumanities in unmistakable terms and throw themselves into the hell-fire to stem the rot. For thousands who killed or were killed, how few were those who died gallantly, trying to save their fellow-men and women from death and dishonour—without waiting to ask to what community they belonged or what religion they professed? There was no doubt a terrific amount of condemnation and denunciation—but it was generally of the 'other' party, the 'other' community, the 'other' religion, on the naive

(far too naive!) assumption that 'others' were the aggressors who perpetrated inhumanities, while 'our' own community acted in 'righteous revenge'. As if, in the matter of murder and loot and arson and other cruelties inflicted on women and children, there can be any division like 'ours' and 'theirs', as if blind revenge against innocent and helpless persons in a hopeless minority can even be "righteous"! The reason why the appeals of most leaders of the various communities fell flat on their followers was that they were not really sincere—there was usually a blatant or subtle attempt to under-rate the evil deeds of their 'own' people and exaggerate those of 'others', a lack of impartiality in assessing responsibility. This is either intellectual and moral dishonesty or cowardice, i.e. fear of incurring the displeasure of those from whom one derives power, as if power that rests on the support of untruth or of morally uneducated persons can ever be worth while! They seem to have forgotten the simple moral maxim that, for every honest person, *the mote in his own eye is far more important than the beam in the other fellow's eye!* Unless we really learn to be far more concerned with our *own* sins of commission and omission, to condemn them unreservedly and fight against them—unless every group and community and its influential leaders do that courageously—there is no hope of a permanent return to civic health and sanity. There were many people who fondly imagined that once the "communal" problem was settled *somehow*—without cleansing the heart and the mind—it will be possible for us to settle down peacefully to our constructive activities. But things did not, and could not, work out this way. So long as the basic attitudes of intolerance, unfairness, selfishness and prejudice persist, they always manage to find new outlets and fratricidal conflicts may develop not on the old basis of religion but on the basis of caste or race or colour or language. This is what has actually happened both in India and Pakistan. And this may perhaps make men and women of goodwill realize, in due course, that it is both wrong and stupid to distinguish amongst criminals on the basis of their community or religion, that there is a certain fraternity of the good people and of

the bad people which transcends all sectarian considerations, that *whoever* does evil takes something away from our collective humanity, that *whoever* does good for evil adds something to it. This compelling sense of human kinship is a matter of slow growth and can never perhaps become universal, though it has been the common inspiration of all great teachers and prophets through the ages. But surely it is possible through proper education to strengthen our sense of fairness to such a degree that we would not condone in ourselves excesses which we loudly condemn in others.

This is where the work of the Universities comes in naturally. They are not merely centres of learning and research but also watch-towers for guarding intellectual and moral integrity, where values are critically tested and protected against the sudden gusts of blind passion and prejudice. In the new India, our universities have no worthier role than that of conserving, advocating and fighting for these moral values. For, they are the values which represent the Hindu genius at its best; they are the values of Islam at its best; they are in fact the essential values of humanity. In the recent past, the passions and prejudices, the bitterness and the conflict, which poisoned the life of the country, were carried over into Colleges and Universities also. It is up to them now to do 'penance' for it, if I may say so, by bridging the gulf, by healing the spiritual wounds that have been inflicted on the body politic, by reaffirming the primacy of the basic moral and social values. They have now to deal with a generation which has 'supped full of horrors', whose minds and emotions have become warped and diseased. Their re-education to normalcy is far more important than their *education* in the conventional sense. They can begin in a small way by working to establish cordiality and friendship amongst their own students, belonging to different castes and communities, so that, in a time of crisis, they may learn to stand together like a rock impervious to the outside madness. Then they can extend their scope of activity gradually by bringing all the local people within the sphere of their influence and *working together* to restore confidence and

good will. This magical recipe of co-operative work and selfless service has not been fully tried in the new situation that has arisen in the country; its potentialities are still unchartered. It is a calumny against human nature to suggest that it responds only to appeals made at its lowest level. It is equally susceptible to higher appeals provided they are made with sincerity and are backed up by the propulsive force of personal example. It is true that, in the latter case, one has to fight against the opposition of vested interests and this makes it an uphill path. But I am *not* promising that the work is easy—only that it is both exhilarating and worthwhile. One cannot realize—unless one tries—what deep satisfaction one can get by working, with patience and faith and charity, say, amongst forlorn, destitute refugees whose minds have suffered as seriously as their bodies, and by striving, through love, sympathy and understanding, to *re-educate* their minds and rekindle in them the normal feelings of decency, kindliness and hope! And if this work is done by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in communities other than their own, the results may well be miraculous. Those who watched the fascinating experience of training refugee teachers from the Punjab and Frontier Province at the Jamia Millia, Delhi, and saw how their early apprehensions and distrust were transformed into confidence and comradeship can bear convincing testimony to this faith.

So, in the building up of this India of the future on just and rational foundations, all classes and communities can and must play their part. But, for reasons inherent in the situation, I would urge that it is specially necessary for young Indian Muslims to take an active part in this work and to them I should like to address a few words in particular. Many of them are passing today through a period of gloom and depression, of frustration and defeatism, which is itself one of the most potent causes of defeat. In the interest of the country it is the duty and privilege of *all* national workers and institutions to retrieve them from this state of mind and to inspire them with confidence and faith. On the other hand, it is the business of Muslim students to study, interpret and

understand the present situation intelligently. In the past, on account of many diverse causes—of which a post-mortem is not necessary but for which many parties and persons were responsible—their leadership had laid emphasis on safeguards, on differences, on a policy of separatism which had disastrous results. It has not only made it difficult for them in recent years to play their full and honourable part in national life but also generated inter-communal tensions and conflicts whose bitter fruits are still in evidence. It is the function of education to enable them to transcend the fetters of this situation.

How is that possible? I think it is necessary that Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs should all reverse the earlier process and actively explore and cultivate *areas of good fellowship* and identities of interest with men of other faiths. The Muslims, in particular, should endeavour to win over their fellow-citizens through the magic of selfless service which recognizes no distinction of sect or 'creed. Wherever there is suffering or misery or deprivation or injustice, wherever the plight of an individual or a group calls for sympathy and help, there is territory for them to annex, irrespective of its geography or race or religion. We have to remember that misery and want and sorrow have no name or caste or religion or nationality. They are human and international and make the whole world kin. The salvation of the world—and our own moral and psychological health—lies in the active realization of this kinship. If Muslims are inspired by genuine patriotism and the inner spirit of Islamic culture, the implications of which I have discussed elsewhere, it should develop in them a *sensitive humanism* and, with that as their guiding star, they can still win a place of honour in this country—which is as much theirs as of any other community—and help in restoring it to mental health and sanity. There is, however, one condition that is inescapable. They have to work without sullenness or mental reservations and with a sincerity and good will which will not be embittered even if the environment continues to be discouraging and unfriendly for some time. The magic of sincerity and love will take some time

to work and must be given a fair chance. And this must be done, as Gandhiji was never tired of pointing out, on a unilateral and not a reciprocal basis. If a thing is right it must not be fettered by conditions—it should be done whole-heartedly without stipulating what others must do in return.

I have referred above to the "true spirit of Islamic culture". This means that, to my way of thinking, it will be quite wrong for Muslims to give up what is significant and distinctive in their religion or cultural traditions. They should, on the other hand, cherish and preserve this heritage—as should the other communities—draw inspiration from it and enrich national life with it, even as in the past they enriched India's heritage of art and architecture, literature and philosophy, crafts and administration. Has not Iqbal's poetry, which drew its inspiration largely from Islamic sources, enriched Indian poetry and philosophy beyond computation—a fact which should incidentally make all of us realize that anything which tends to arrest the study and development of Urdu language and literature is not only a grave injustice to the Urdu speaking elements in India but is calculated to impoverish Indian thought and culture as a whole. It is, however, essential that, in drawing inspiration from this great treasure-house of the spirit, they should not interpret Islam in narorw and exclusive terms as has been done by many short-sighted persons but in that deeper and truer sense which glitters like a pearl in the prose of Azad and the poetry of Hali and Iqbal:

The style may not be sparkling
But the thought may perchance appeal to thee.
Religion is either the lauding of the Lord's name,
In the limitless expanse of the skies!
Or, a passive chanting of prayers
In the lap of dust!
That is the religion of self-conscious, God-intoxicated men,
This is the religion of the Mulla, the trees and stones!

They should remember that they are not a votary of the

religion which the Mulla, and the vegetable and mineral kingdom share in common and which consists in the "passive chanting of prayers in the lap of dust"! If, in their dealings with others, there is genuine give-and-take and a spirit of fellowship and if they succeed in developing high and exacting ideals of conduct and character in themselves, they will be able to break through any walls of prejudices and mistrust. This is a time for firmness and for intellectual and moral integrity, not for bowing down before, or compromising with, evil and injustice or with our own lower or weaker selves. The path of duty is quite clear and unambiguous—it is to be a crusader in behalf of whatever is just and righteous and against whatever is unjust and inhuman, irrespective of where it may be found—whether amongst Muslims or non-Muslims, believers or unbelievers, people of the East or people of the West. Whoever gives his allegiance to false idols of race or colour or caste or worships at the shrine of money or wealth or any other manifestation of untruth is on the road that leads eventually to moral destruction. It should be our business and our ambition to strive and implant better standards of conduct and values in ourselves as well as those with whom we are destined to be wayfarers in the pilgrimage of life.

XVI

THIS NEW EDUCATION*

Is the New Education "New"?

I WAS ONCE talking to an important and responsible educational official and, during the course of the conversation, I asked him if he would be attending the Conference of the New Educational Fellowship which was then being held. He replied with incredible naivete but without hesitation: "No. I do not believe in these new fads." Is that categorical summing up fair to the movement of thought for which the New Education stands? To the convinced 'new educationist', this question may sound silly and impertinent; but there are many outsiders—and some who are *not* outsiders in the field of education—who seriously hold this view. I, therefore, propose to discuss briefly the principles and ideals of New Education in relation to the modern world with a view to meet the criticism implied in the above remark.

The "New Education" is *not* new, in the sense of being a new-fangled, educational fashion devised by certain eccentric teachers as was alleged by its opponents in the early stages of its development. It is inspired by certain truths and ideals which are fundamental to human nature and, therefore, I hold that the mind of every great teacher, whether secular or religious, has been in tune with these truths and his heart has throbbed in unison with these ideals. The prophets who appealed to the inner nature of man and utilized the power of love rather than force for their conversion were "new educationists"; Socrates who made people think intelligently

* Inaugural Address at the First Conference on "New Education" held at Gwalior.

and fearlessly was a "new educationist"; the mother who sees the spark of goodness in her child and, with sympathy, intuition and patience guides his natural development is a "new educationist"; the teacher who may be ignorant of the ideas of the orthodox leaders of the movement but tries instinctively to liberate the spirit of his pupils is a "new educationist". In so far, therefore, as this movement is a response to the desire and effort of all true teachers to catch a better and happier vision of their work, it is not new. It enshrines some of those undeniable values which religion, philosophy and ethics have always recognized and preached. They often failed—or achieved only partial success—because no widely applicable instrument had been forged to make these values effective in the conduct of groups and individuals. Education which could, and should, have been helpful in this work was often dominated by different, and often repressive, ideas. The New Education can be best understood as a promising and pliable instrument to translate these values and ideals into practice. In so far, however, as the New Education is a protest against the traditional concept of a mechanical and soulless education it *is* undoubtedly new. In the past, education paid attention to every factor involved in the educative process—curriculum, methods, organization, examination, inspection—except the one that really counts: the child, his psychology, his needs, his creative urges, his pulsating life. The New Education has brought about a "Copernican Revolution" by placing the child in the centre of the stage and relegating everything else to a secondary place.

Is the New Education a "fad"? It is *not* a particular *method* of teaching evolved as a result of some personal idiosyncracy but a *spirit* which must inform the entire educational process, a certain vision of education and of life which must colour the work of the teacher and the activities of children alike. When the principles underlying the New Education have passed into the everyday practice of our schools and our teachers have become imbued with them, it will cease to be the distinct and the somewhat challenging movement that it is today and become a part of our general educational

activity. Like the good doctor and the good teacher, it will prove its success and efficiency by becoming unnecessary. I wondered what my friend, who is so contemptuous of fads, will then do—perhaps he will not then look upon it as a fad, for it will have put on the mantle of orthodoxy!

Its Directing Principles

(a) *Reverence for childhood:* What are the most important of the principles which inspire the various movements and methods associated with New Education? The central and fundamental article of its creed is faith in, and reverence for, childhood and its potentialities. A teacher who lacks this reverence can never enter into the kingdom of new education, even though he may possess all kinds of pedagogic virtues and qualifications. Russell has expressed this truth with great force in lines of haunting beauty:

"A man who is to educate really well, and is to make the young grow and develop into their full stature, must be filled through and through with the spirit of reverence.... He feels in all that lives, but especially in human beings, and most of all in children, something sacred, indefinable, unlimited, something individual and strangely precious, the growing principle of life, an embodied fragment of the dumb striving of the world. In the presence of the child, he feels an unaccountable humility—a humility not easily defensible on any rational ground, and yet somehow nearer to wisdom than the easy self-confidence of many parents and teachers. His imagination shows him what the child may become, for good or evil, how its impulses may be thwarted, how its hopes must be dimmed and the life in it grow less living, how its trust will be bruised and its quick desires replaced by brooding will. All this gives him a longing to help the child in its own battle...not for some outside end...but for the ends which the child's own spirit is obscurely seeking."*

This is the attitude of *reverence* which the new educationist

* "Selected Papers" of Bertrand Russell.

must adopt towards the child and, as for his *faith*, I have always found inspiration in the significant remark of Tagore:

"Every child brings with him the message that God has not yet despaired of man."

It is in this faith that the teacher must carry on his patient work of helping the child to discover his true individuality and come into adequate possession of his powers. If we analyse many of the newer educational movements and methods, we shall find that they invariably centre round the child's personality and growth and seek to liberate his powers.

(b) *Cultivation of Uniqueness:* Respect for the child's individuality must lead to many important and far-reaching changes in our traditional conceptions of method and discipline. Every child possesses a unique individuality which is not repeated in any other child. This is true in spite of the great many traits and characteristics which constitute the fabric of their common humanity. Modern psychology and psycho-analysis have revealed the tremendous range of these individual differences in children—in temperament, in character, in intelligence, in their reactions to the physical as well as the social environment. Beneath an appearance of similarity, which often deceives the casual observer and the unintelligent teacher, these children are actively engaged in the construction of their own unique vision and concept of the world in which they are living and in assimilating it in their original and characteristic way. The new educationist recognizes this fact and rejects all those mechanical, stereotyped methods of teaching which treat children as heads of cattle in a herd, requiring drill rather than individual and sympathetic treatment. Method has no sanctity as such; it is the needs and reactions and the intellectual and emotional responses of the child which determine the suitability of any particular method. It is not merely in the interest of the child that the teacher avoids a dead uniformity of approach in teaching. He is keenly conscious of the fact that the richness of the world consists in its diversity, in the fact of children being different from one another and possessing varied capacities and qualities.

If genius is to be given a chance for self-expression and the world is to be saved from the dominance of mediocrity, then education must seriously address itself to the task of cultivating whatever uniqueness may be latent in the child. In every normal child there is some spark of talent good for himself and useful for society: the teacher must patiently discover it and fan it into a flame.

(c) *Development of Individuality in a Social Medium:* In its quest for individuality, the New Education has not been betrayed—as one of its greatest exponents, Rousseau, tended to be—into a denial of the importance of social life and social culture. It believes that individuality grows and realizes itself best in a social medium. In other words, it is only when children are allowed to come into intimate activity and co-operative contact with other children and adults, when they are thrown into whole-hearted participation in social situations that they discover their true selves and bring out the best that is in them. Hence, in their education, they must be fed on common interests and purposes and learn to value and appropriate the resources of their common culture. The strengthening of the social sense is an essential condition for peace in a society which stresses the value of individuality, for that alone is the basis of tolerance and social cohesion. This will, of course, differ fundamentally from the regimentation of the individual implied in the theory and practice of totalitarian States, where co-operation must be limited to ready-made, unquestionable purposes and the individual as such has little hand in the direction of his activity or the determination of his objectives. The New Education aims instead at the dedication of the fully and fearlessly developed individuality to the creative service of society, interpreting society in its widest significance. It seeks to broaden the scope of the individual's loyalties to the maximum possible extent with the object of creating a truly international and humanitarian outlook, not limited at every step by racial and geographical considerations.

(d) *Freedom for the Child:* Then there is that much discussed concept of Freedom. The New Education regards freedom as

an essential condition for growth in intellect as well as character. The new educationist desires to bring up children in an atmosphere of intellectual and moral freedom, where they have an opportunity to become active participants in the process of their own education. The mind can only develop when it is allowed to come into fruitful relationship with its environment and to handle it in a purposeful manner. It involves methods of self-activity, the principle of learning by doing, the valuation of living experience above passively assimilated information, the chance of making mistakes and learning from them. On the side of character training, it postulates freedom of social intercourse, self-government leading to self-discipline and a gradual, actively acquired, personal consciousness of the principles underlying social and ethical behaviour. On the side of organization, it demands freedom—not only for the children but also for the teachers—from those restrictions and irritating interferences which take joy out of their work, from that detailed prescription of methods and curricula which make their teaching mechanical and lifeless, from the tyranny of the examinations, which arrest all freedom of action and experimentation. It also implies respect for the freedom of the school regarded as a corporate spiritual entity with a distinctive life and tradition of its own—a freedom which is often threatened by Inspectors, Departments of Public Instruction, examining authorities, unintelligent industrialists, politicians and other busybodies. Education must not be conducted for the sake of any vested interests, or for serving ulterior political, economic, social or religious ends; it must be conducted in the interest of the *child*—what he is and what he may become through free development.

(e) *The Release of the Creative Impulse:* The demand for freedom has an ethical as well as educational justification. Without freedom there can be no release of the creative impulses which are found in all normal children, in varying measure. Genuine happiness consists in the feeling that one is giving free expression to one's powers in the service of some significant and acceptable purpose. In other words, it

implies a relationship of harmony between the worker and his work and the instinctive realization that one's creative urges are finding adequate expression through it.* Education, inspired by this ideal, should become a great revolutionary force in human affairs and relationships. For, it implies that happiness must be sought *not* in the exploitation of others for one's limited and selfish purposes, not in the attempt to dominate others by force, not in the feverish desire to annex as many external possessions as possible; it is to be found in creation and creative service. This creation may take many possible forms—literary, artistic, intellectual; it may express itself in the field of craftsmanship or social service and, above all, in "the creation of the self by the self", the gradual unfolding of one's personality as a work of art, characterized by the attributes of harmony, balance and unity in diversity. But in every type of creative work, the dominant motive must be not a selfish taking-in of whatever may be available but a generous giving-out of the self to the service of some great purpose. Of course, there is no logical *method* of proving that this creative happiness is superior to the 'possessive' happiness which haunted the dreams and inspired the misdeeds of many persons whom a false conception of history still honours and whose doings burden the memories of school children. As a matter of faith and ideal, the New Education is dedicated to the promotion of creative happiness in the men and women of the future.

(f) *Education for Happiness:* How will all these—freedom, creativity, individual adaptation—react on the work and life of the schools? The New Education endeavours, through working on these principles, to bring joy and happiness into schools and into the life of children which formal schooling has tended to cramp unduly. Joy is, according to Bergson, "the seal which Nature sets" on every piece of creative work which is properly completed. So the new educationist tries to organize all the activities of children in such a way that their work will yield them joy at every step. Happiness,

*A fuller description of the role of the Creative Impulse will be found in Chapter III of this book.

therefore, is one of the main objectives of this education.

This objective may strike many orthodox teachers as too trite; others may regard it as mischievous. But it is really neither trite nor mischievous. It is not *trite* because it does not confuse happiness with mere amusement or idle pleasure but looks upon it as a necessary accompaniment of all significant and successful activity and, as such, an essential condition of a full and adequate life. It is not *mischievous*, because it does not undermine effort or preach "soft pedagogy" but considers the subjective feeling of happiness to be an essential factor in stimulating whole-hearted activity. Moreover, so far as the child is concerned, it is only the hopeless misogynist or misanthrope who will grudge him all possible happiness. If we think of all the repressive paraphernalia which has been elaborated by parents and teachers to repress the joy of life and the creative impulses and activity of children—in the name of discipline and morality and scholarship—we will be forced to admit that the new education is merely trying to do a little belated justice to oppressed childhood. In his desire to educate for happiness, the teacher does not fix a glassy and forbidding look on the child's distant future and let its blighting shadow fall too early on his life; he tries to make the child's present life—in the school, at home and in other social contacts—as full and rich and vivid and joyous as possible. It is visualized primarily as participation in innately satisfying and significant experiences, not as a forced, uninteresting preparation for a remote and incomprehensible future. This view accounts for the fact that even the physical environment of a new school is so strikingly different from that of a traditional school dominated by a false conception of discipline.

This Sorry World of Ours

This is, in very brief outline, the new education which we advocate: an education inspired by faith and reverence for childhood, by respect for individuality, by the desire to release the child's creative impulses in an atmosphere of freedom and

sympathy, by a recognition of the intimate relationship between the individual and the community and by the effort to bring happiness into the life of growing children. What is the significance of such an education for our present-day world? What message does it bring for humanity harassed by ugly discords and conflicts?

Let us recall to ourselves the condition of the world in which we are living. In spite of the great advance in our knowledge, in spite of our progress in the perfection of the scientific technique, in spite of our incredibly increased control of natural forces and physical resources, we have failed to make constructive use of our intelligence and have allowed our destructive impulses to dominate national and international life. The growth of our social and moral consciousness has not kept pace with the growth in our power and the failure of the former to direct and control the latter has resulted in a situation which is fraught with incalculable danger for the future of our culture and civilization. Individual life is cramped and embittered by jealousies, repressions, inhibitions leading to all kinds of nervous disorders and destructive impulses. National and international life is based on an insane and irrational competition, on the exploitation of weaker groups and nations, on social and economic injustices perpetrated by force and upheld by law, on a lust for power and destruction. "The source of all this," Russell contends, "does not lie in the external world, nor does it lie in the purely cognitive part of our nature, since we know more than men ever knew before. It lies in our passions; it lies in our emotional habits; it lies in the sentiments instilled in youth, and in the phobias created in infancy. The cure for our problems is to make men sane, and to make men sane, they must be educated sanely." He goes on to point out, with uncompromising frankness, how at present the various factors of social life are all tending towards social disaster. "Religion encourages stupidity, and an insufficient sense of reality; sex education frequently produces nervous disorders, and where it fails to do so overtly, too often plants discords in the unconscious which make happiness in adult life impossible;

nationalism as taught in schools implies that the most important duty of young men is homicide; class feeling promotes acquiescence in economic injustice; and competition promotes ruthlessness in the social struggle. Can it be wondered at that a world in which the forces of the State are devoted to producing in the young insanity, stupidity, readiness for homicide, economic injustice and ruthlessness—can it be wondered at, I say, that such a world is not a happy one? Is a man to be condemned as immoral and subversive because he wishes to substitute for these elements in the moral education of the present-day intelligence, sanity, kindliness, and a sense of justice?"

The Message of the New Education

This quotation from Russell puts the case for the New Education with admirable clarity and force. No one, who has courage and integrity, can deny that this picture of our world is substantially correct and Russell's appeal for greater "intelligence, sanity, kindliness and a sense of justice" in the conduct of our affairs is of great significance for teachers. This also defines the scope of work which New Education has to accomplish. It must not be interpreted as a pedagogical movement in the narrow sense, concerned with certain technical reforms in methods and curricula. It is essentially a spiritual movement aiming at producing far-reaching changes, first in the minds and emotions of youth and then indirectly in the network of institutions within which their life is environed. Education is primarily concerned with the mind, the emotions and the behaviour of the young but it has an indirect and long-range influence on the re-shaping of the social order also. It cannot exercise its full influence on the disposition of the children, if it has to function within the framework of social forces which are hostile to it in spirit and intention. Education is thus seen to be a part of the larger forces of social reconstruction. But, in view of the conflicts and the war phobia with which many nations of the world are afflicted, it cannot afford to wait passively for the reorganiza-

tion of the social-political fabric; it must assume the lead in the crusade for a saner world by stressing values which I have discussed in this book.

The New Education, therefore, seeks to improve the existing evils of our society by advocating the cause of freedom rather than repression, by stressing creative rather than possessive happiness, by exalting the ideal of service above that of domination, by preaching tolerance and respect for individual difference rather than their forcible suppression for the sake of securing a mechanical uniformity, by nurturing the human spirit in its infinite manifestations—practical, intellectual, artistic, ethical—instead of discouraging intelligence and originality.

What is the type of the individual, then, which the New Education aims at producing? The child who has been brought up in an atmosphere of freedom, where he can give free play to his impulses and his desire for activity, will be free from many of the repressions and complexes which unintelligent and unsympathetic 'discipline' usually plants in children. He will be more open, more generous, more trusting and affectionate than the average child in the existing school. He will possess a more fully developed individuality, in which his originality and uniqueness will have been preserved as valuable assets, instead of being frowned upon and suppressed as inconvenient departures from a hypothetical norm. He will take greater joy in doing things, in creative and constructive work and show a greater capacity for the appreciation of beauty. He will be more co-operative, more sensitive to the interests of others, more concerned with the reactions of his activity on the welfare of his fellow-beings, more keenly and spontaneously devoted to the aim of securing the "Good Life" for all, instead of appropriating it for himself or his class only. The resolution of many of these conflicts—between the individual and the community, between parents and children, between teachers and pupils and above all within the child's own inner being—will have a tremendous liberating influence on the adults. It will bring in its train a great sense of release which is not only a source of personal happiness but also

provides a congenial atmosphere for reducing the bitterness which characterizes group and national relationships at present. Dare the world turn its back on a movement of thought and a vision of education which promise this great achievement? I would like to share with you a very appropriate quotation from Einstein's autobiography "Out of My Later Years" which provides a welcome and authoritative confirmation of the view of "New Education" that I have tried to develop:

"Sometimes one sees in the school simply the instrument for transferring a maximum quantity of knowledge to the growing generation. But that is not right. Knowledge is dead; the school, however, serves the living.... Words are and remain empty sound, and the road to perdition has ever been accompanied by lip service to an ideal. Personalities are not formed by what is heard and said, but by labour and activity.

"The most important method of education accordingly has always consisted of that in which the pupil is urged to actual performance.... Behind every achievement exists the motivation. The same work may owe its origin to fear and compulsion, or to ambitious desire for authority and distinction or to loving interest in the object and a desire for truth and understanding, and thus to that divine curiosity which every healthy child possesses, but which is often early weakened.

"Darwin's theory of the struggle for existence and the selectivity connected with it has been cited by many persons as authorization for encouragement of the competitive spirit. They have tried to prove pseudo-scientifically the necessity of the destructive economic struggle of competition between individuals. But this is wrong, because man owes his strength in the struggle for existence to the fact that he is a socially living animal.

"Therefore one should guard against preaching to the young man success, in the customary sense, as the aim of life. For a successful man is he who receives a great deal from his fellow-men, usually incomparably more than his corresponding service to them. *The value of a man, however, should be seen in what he gives and not in what he is able to receive.*

"The most important motive for work in the school and in life is the pleasure in work, pleasure in its result, and the knowledge of the value of the result to the community. Such a psychological foundation leads to a joyous desire for the highest possessions of man—knowledge and artistlike workmanship.

"The awakening of these productive psychological powers is certainly less easy than is the practice of force or the awakening of individual ambition, but is the more valuable for it. The point is to develop the childlike inclination for play and the childlike desire for recognition and to guide the child over to important fields for society. If a school succeeds in working successfully from such points of view, it will be highly honoured by the rising generation, and the tasks given by the school will be gladly submitted to as a sort of gift. I have known children who prefer schooltime to vacations. The wit was not wrong who said: 'Education is that which remains, even if one has forgotten everything he learned in school.'"

The New Education—A Life to be Lived

It is necessary, however, to sound a note of caution for the sake of the enthusiastic, easily satisfied teacher. The New Education does not offer any easy magical formula which will solve all educational problems, nor is it a mystical pledge, the mere signing of which will bring about an educational millennium! It is even less a well defined 'method' of universal applicability which may be applied mechanically and with fool-proof accuracy. Putting new education into practice is a difficult and uphill task, for it requires, on the part of teachers, many intellectual and emotional qualities—a keen and alert intelligence, a capacity to link theory to practice, readiness to learn through experience, unceasing professional and cultural study, an intuitive insight into children's nature and a love for them which neither stupidity nor mischief may dim. But that is not all: the New Education is more exacting still: it requires something more than these excellent qualities. It is an *attitude* towards the child and his growth which has to be

assimilated, a social and cultural *outlook* which has to be accepted, a far-reaching intellectual and emotional *reorientation* which has to be brought about—in a word, *it is a life to be lived.* The New Education in India as elsewhere will ultimately be what the teachers make it and what the teachers *do* will depend, in the last instance, on what they *are:* on their culture, their capacity, their idealism, their faith and their integrity. They can make the New Education a success only when they have a genuine reverence for childhood, faith in the child's immense possibilities, patience and sympathy with him in his groping and halting attempts towards self-realization, appreciation of uniqueness and differences, and, above all, a sense of joy in the great creative work which they are doing as teachers. Let those only enter this kingdom who are prepared to accept these ideals and to undertake the re-education of the self along these lines.

A Duty and an Adventure

Like all great, living movements, the modern movement of New Education also started with the creative effort of a few individuals who had seen the light and were anxious to share it with others—with children, with parents and with teachers. Here, a teacher with idealism, insight and enthusiasm; there, a small private school with a band of devoted workers; somewhere an educational theorist with an intuitive understanding of children's minds and spirits; a group of enlightened parents anxious to provide a better and happier schooling for their children than they had themselves received: these were the pioneers who, modestly but with faith, kindled the first few torches. These have since been carried from school to school, from country to country, from continent to continent till the New Education has become a truly international movement which is fighting, on the whole, a winning battle. It has had, and still continues to have, setbacks as has happened in the totalitarian countries, for instance—but, on the whole, it is winning new and eager adherents everywhere and in some countries like Norway, Denmark and the United Kingdom it

has even won over the Departments of Public Instruction.

In our country, the movement is still in its infancy; there are a few "new schools" which are extremely good and promising—Santiniketan at Bolpur, Jamia at Delhi, Vidya Bhawan at Udaipur, the Basic institutions at Sevagram, the New Era School at Bombay, the Banasthali Vidyapeeth—and some scattered educational thinkers and workers in different parts of the country. There is the great movement of Basic Education. But the large majority of teachers and schools are still in blissful ignorance of the new ideas; their leaven has not begun to work, on a large scale in our educational system. It is not right to look up expectantly to the Departments of Public Instruction only to take the lead in this matter. The first impulse and momentum for great changes must come from the educational work of private individuals and private institutions. It is the duty of all wide-awake and progressive teachers in India to associate themselves actively with this movement and to dedicate themselves to the service of its ideals. And when they have actually undertaken this "duty" in the right spirit, they will discover that it is also a fascinating *adventure* which yields its own reward and brings its own joy at every step: an adventure in the making of better, happier, and more just and balanced men and women to replace the bitter, inhibited, self-centred and un-co-operative persons who constitute the majority in the world at present.

XVII

EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

THE PROBLEM of Education for Democracy has been seriously exercising the minds of both educationists and politicians for many decades and the totalitarian menace which our generation had to face has brought it more acutely to the forefront. In the early part of this century democracy *seemed* firmly entrenched in the saddle and progressive political opinion believed that it had come to stay and certain minor modifications will make it an effective vehicle of peaceful, intelligent and uninterrupted development of all the peoples of the world. They took it for granted that it was a good thing and educationists believed that the problem was merely one of thinking out the measures that should be adopted for training the younger generation for the proper discharge of their duties as democratic citizens. But the growth of totalitarianism and the breakdown of democracy in many parts of the world have thrown a new and vigorous challenge to our age which it dare not ignore. Today we have not merely to discuss the part that education can play in training people for democracy but also—and in the first place—the more fundamental and far-reaching question: Do we, as educationists, really consider democracy a desideratum, a good thing in itself for which we should strive? Or, will it be better for us to throw overboard the old cargo of sentimental and unserviceable ideas of democracy that we have learnt to cherish, perhaps unthinkingly, and to swim along with the new and turbulent political stream? I propose to present briefly the case for my faith in democracy as a way of life and to suggest what educational institutions might do to help not only in achieving and popularizing this way of life but also to make democracy really acceptable to the enlightened

conscience of mankind. It is necessary to face this issue boldly because, apart from the bigger world problems, the ruthless march of political events in our own country and the aftermath of Independence and Partition have raised many obstinate question marks in the minds of people and created new dangers for the body politic which education must take into account. Let me first put forward, in the first person singular, the theoretical position in favour of Democracy as I see it.

I believe in Democracy because I consider it to be a system of Government and a way of life which offers greater scope than *any other* known system for the development of human individuality and the varied talents which Nature has given to individuals and groups. My study of Psychology and Sociology assures me that men and communities thrive best in an atmosphere of freedom and that any system which seeks to impose a rigid uniformity of ideas and practices sins both against the laws of God and the spirit of man. The richness of the world and of its manifold cultures depend on their diversity—a truism which cannot be too often stressed and is particularly important in our present national situation—and the infinite possibilities, latent in man, can only be unfolded if they are permitted to seek free and unhindered self-expression. A totalitarian regime is *ipso facto* impatient of differences and tends to sacrifice them in the interest of efficiency, interpreted in a narrow and unattractive sense. Driven by the logic of its own being, it also tends to be as exclusive in its international relations as in its national policy. It is a well-known fact, for instance, that Nazi education was as narrow and racial-minded in its objectives and as ruthless in its methods as the Nazi political regime. In so far as democracy stands for a respect for the individual, for the encouragement of uniqueness in human beings rather than the imposition of a set pattern, for that free discussion and friendly clash of ideas out of which may emerge truth and progressive thought, and for a toleration of cultural and intellectual differences, an educationist cannot but lend his support to it. For, are these not, after all, the objectives

which true educationists of all times, from Plato downwards, have always cherished; faith in the human spirit, respect for truth and freedom to seek it, and the enrichment of culture through diversity of talents? Any system of Government, any social order which suppresses these values is, from the educational point of view, retrograde and obscurantist.

This, however, is only one side of the picture. If I stopped at that, I should be confusing the *ideal* conception of democracy with its actual, incomplete and adulterated practice. Modern Democracy, in Europe and America—in fact everywhere—has so far proved a mixed blessing. It has been cleverly exploited by vested interests—the demagogue without principles, the capitalist without a social conscience, the politician without vision and the press without idealism. It has failed to educate the electorate sufficiently to be able to exercise their power or to perform their duties and safeguard their rights and privilges; it has not redressed that unequal distribution of wealth which is not only an economic but also a cultural injustice. It has been content to allow a majority of its citizens to live less than fully human lives and, in times of stress and emergency, it has proved less efficient than the machinery of totalitarian States. The problem, therefore, is not only *to adapt education to democracy but to make democracy itself "safe" for education!* Even well meaning persons, who suffer from intellectual laziness and like to come to short-cut conclusions, are apt to attribute all these defects to democracy *as such* and not to the fact that there has not been *enough* of democracy, which would be a more correct diagnosis. Democracy has failed to fulfil our hopes and its promise because we have been content with certain forms of *politcial* democracy alone and have not succeeded in establishing it in other phases of life, i.e. building up economic, social and cultural democracy without which political democracy is apt to become a pliant tool in the hands of unscrupulous power-seekers. Education can give its undivided and whole-hearted allegiance to democracy *if* it really becomes an instrument of social justice and gives to the masses of the people—in *fact,* and not merely in *name*!—the means and the resources,

material and cultural, without which fulness of life is impossible for them. A fair distribution of wealth, a generous dissemination of cultural and social services and the breaking down of the invidious class distinctions, based on economic status, which hamper social mobility at present—these are essential factors in the process of making democracy genuine and effective. As an educationist, it is not my special business to specify *how* democracy in this richer and more comprehensive sense can be brought into being. It is the function of statesmen to work towards this objective, and those that have not the vision, the intelligence and the efficiency to do so, should retire from the field and, like defeated Japanese generals, write poetry and cultivate potatoes—for *that* will not do any one much harm! It would be unfair to regard any people as unsuited to a democratic way of life, because their leaders have failed to solve their problems intelligently. It is fatally easy to put the blame on Democracy or on the "people" or some other agency but difficult to overcome obstacles with tact and patience and hard, steady work. And human nature is generally partial to the adoption of short and easy cuts which the educationist cannot afford to follow!

The conditions enumerated above not only define the true nature of Democracy but also indicate the role of education in a democratic community. Education must be so oriented —in its ideology, its methods and its organization—that it will develop the *basic* qualities of character which are necessary for the successful functioning of the democratic life. What are these qualities? Amongst these, I should place above all, in our present-day context, *a passion for social justice* and a quickening of the social conscience so that our young men and women will learn to demand for others—irrespective of caste or creed or race or nation—the good things that they desire for themselves. The heart of a truly educated man must respond to the sorrows and joys of all his fellow-men; his sympathy and sensitiveness must not be circumscribed by prejudices or narrow loyalties. In a message to the World Fellowship of Faiths held in America, Romain Rolland gave eloquent expression to this sense of the unity of mankind,

particularly of its nobler souls, with all those who are oppressed or down-trodden and deprived of their human rights:

"One is the more alive, the more one embraces life—the more one's own well-being enlarges to become the well-being of others. And the duty of those most alive is to nourish with their substance those less alive—to come to the aid of the weak and the suffering, the oppressed, the miserable. The sublime cry of Vivekananda—'My God, the suffering people'—is a fitting appeal to our energies. God struggles in the combat for individuals and for peoples who are defrauded of the light and of the vital air and who should regain them. He who loves God,—let him defend Him among the millions of those who are oppressed by injustice and social inequality."

It is an objective difficult of achievement but not beyond the power of a well organized and rightly oriented educational system; for, if an efficiently conducted educational machinery —as in Japan or Russia or Germany—can so quickly and completely transform the mentality of a people as we have seen with our eyes, why should the system that we wish to bring into being prove less effective? We have to adopt educational measures which will bring children together in active comradeship of work and service, which will train them in co-operation, discipline and leadership through self-government, ignoring all distinctions of wealth and social status, make them poignantly conscious of the injustices which are festering in our social system and give them the desire to fight against them.

Secondly, I would plead for *Tolerance* as a major objective of democratic education. Since a genuinely democratic society not only allows but actively welcomes cultural and intellectual differences in individuals as well as groups and permits the free play of ideas, it cannot exist without constant friction, unless the quality of tolerance becomes engrained in their intellectual and emotional outlook. Nothing is doing greater harm to the well-being of the nation in India today than the growing intolerance, the absence of large-heartedness, which characterize the relations of groups and

individuals who may happen to differ in certain respects. The narrow, intolerant and revivalist outlook which has been developing of late is a menace of serious portent against which all educationists and others, who have the good of the country at heart, have to contend with sincerity and conviction. Democracy in India will not survive, will not even truly come into being, unless various groups and communities feel assured that, in the India of future, cultural differences and characteristics will be respected and not repressed. The schools can give valuable help in the cultivation of this quality of tolerance in many ways—as I have discussed elsewhere—by encouraging the reverent study of various cultural and religious movements, by the *common* celebration of important occasions associated with particular communities, through an unbiassed study of history viewed in its right perspective and, above all, through the silent but powerful influence of the teachers' personal example and the general impact of the social life and activities of the School on the students.

In the third place, I will plead for a concerted attempt *to raise the intellectual and cultural standards of the education* that we impart in our Schools and Colleges. A systematic cultivation of the critical intelligence which would train students to understand better the complex problems of modern civilization and enable them to exercise their rights and duties properly should be one of our most important educational objectives. Many of our social evils continue to exist, not because of conscious ill-will but because of ignorance and apathy which our present education does little to eradicate. A sound system of education could eliminate or at least reduce such apathy.

In the fourth place, our education should strengthen in the growing generation a deep and true love for their country—its culture, its intellectual and artistic achievements, its ethical values and ideals. But it should be enlightened, not blind, love; appreciative of what is truly good and noble, critical of what may be false or unworthy or unfair. Patriotism in this sense is the highest of virtues and well worth the devotion of teachers. But the patriotism which blinds us to *our* faults

and *others'* merits, which obscures our sense of justice and clarity of vision—and the world is so full today of such false patriots!—is the greatest sin against the finest ideals of humanity. Our education should try to make sure that in our newly accentuated feeling of nationalism, we are not betrayed into a devotion to *false* patriotism. Love for the country is as much a devotion to the best of its achievements as a burning desire to fight against all that slurs her fair name and perpetuates injustice or exploitation.

Finally, our education must try and develop in our boys and girls *a love for work*, the attitude of the true craftsman who takes pride and delight in doing the best of which he is capable, who hates superficial or half-hearted effort. The present educational system tends to produce the typical 'bourgeois' mentality which aims at "getting on" in life, regardless of the means, at securing the maximum for oneself in return for putting in the minimum of effort possible. This emphasis on "taking in" instead of "giving out", on exploitation rather than service, on storing oneself up like a miser instead of generously dedicating oneself to hard and honourable work, is the greatest moral condemnation both of modern education and modern society. It should be the business of schools to produce men and women who will be prepared to work throughout their life like good labourers and craftsmen, stretching themselves to the maximum extent in the service of good causes.

It is the business of all educational institutions to play their part in this educational reconstruction, according to their resources and the capacity of their students and cultivate in them these basic qualities of character. An education that fails to inspire students with a burning passion for social justice, to break down barriers of caste, creed and colour, to deepen their cultural understanding and sympathy and broaden their intellectual outlook, to instil a love for honest work and an attachment to national culture is unworthy of its high status and purpose. A *democratic* education then, as I visualize it, will be dedicated to the training of a generation of men and women who will be tolerant and broad-minded in

their outlook, who will strive for the cause of social justice and not rest content till it has been achieved,—so far as it is humanly possible—who will have their intelligence so disciplined that they will be able to understand the complex fabric of modern life, to see what role they should play in it and who will have the will-power to do so with courage and persistence.

It is, of course, easy to define objectives, as I have done, but difficult to translate them into the concrete terms of educational programmes and methods. For the former is, after all, an intellectual appraisal while the latter is a way of life, a struggling, in the midst of difficulties and disappointments, towards a better life and a better social order. But is there not something to be said in favour of achieving intellectual clarity as a first step to right action? It would *not* be correct to imagine that people *generally* believe in these objectives and ideals. Ignorance and apathy, the contrary pull of selfish interests, the deadening effect of the modern struggle for living, the unscrupulousness of modern propaganda devices—all these and many other factors tend to obscure our vision and purpose. It is essential that thinkers and teachers should constantly stress these values and incorporate them into their own life so that there may be some chance of their breaking through the crust of indifference or malevolence and becoming embodied in the national character.

One word more. Some educationists have been seriously debating whether it is right in principle that education should be deliberately biassed towards a democratic or, for that matter, any particular type of social order, whether it will not come within the danger-zone of "indoctrination". To them a terse reply would be: if Schools can be used—as they have been and are being used—for indoctrinating children with the poison of racial arrogance and superiority, with blind patriotism, with suicidal nationalism, with sectarian narrowness, with war hysteria, why should we not take the 'risk' that may possibly be involved in teaching children to be just and brave, truthful and intelligent, broad-minded and human in their outlook?

XVIII

THE CHALLENGE AND THE PROMISE OF SCIENCE

I HAVE HAD occasion in this book to refer to the fact that the two great forces that have made the modern world are Science and Democracy and, with all the aberrations to which they have been subject during their chequered career, they remain the most powerful beacons of hope in our age. Democracy aims at the liberation of man from the many oppressive social and political bonds which have fettered his growth and strives to win for him his full human dignity and status. Science aims at releasing his mind from bondage to superstition, ignorance and obscurantism and to equip him with the power to control the laws and forces of Nature and bend them to the service of his purposes. The two are not, however, separate and unconnected features of modern life, but are really dynamically and purposefully intertwined. What is the nature of this connection? What is the challenge that Science has thrown and what is the promise that it holds out before our age?

Democracy defines, broadly speaking, the shape of our social purposes and the ends and objectives of our social endeavour; it demands that the "good life", which implies the proper distribution and enjoyment of material and cultural resources of modern civilization, should become the possession of all and not the monopoly of the few. Science may be regarded, from the social point of view, as one of the most powerful means at man's disposal for achieving this purpose. It gives him the power and the resourcefulness to bring the 'good life', *if he will*, within the reach of the hundreds of millions of men and women whose interests and welfare Democracy aspires to serve.

This is not, I know, a comprehensive definition of the role and function of Science but it is its most important aspect—the social aspect—and the one that needs to be stressed urgently in the present set-up. In the very first broadcast that he gave as Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru—with his instinctive sense of right values—found time to refer to the part that Science must play in the reconstruction of the Indian economy and in solving many of its crucial problems of food, clothing and industrial development. I propose to consider the place of Science in the new India mainly from this social point of view.

The argument has so far taken for granted that it is a good thing to exploit Science for the increase of human power and productivity. But there is by no means a unanimity of opinion on this point today. Many modern thinkers are experiencing an acute searching of the heart on the question of the role which Science should be allowed to play in the evolving drama of human life. The great progress of Science which took place in the last century—both on the theoretical and practical side—was at first looked upon as an entirely unmixed blessing. It had tremendously increased the domain of man's knowledge, adding new dimensions to it; it had given him undreamt of power over the forces of his environment and, by the application of its discoveries to the processes of industry, it had increased his production a hundredfold. This was good, and the optimists of the nineteenth century could, with confidence, look forward to an interminable future of progress and prosperity. But most of them had, somehow, overlooked the danger which is always implicit in the increase of power—the danger that power, whether political or scientific, can be put to undesirable and unjust uses. As the age of science unrolled its latent potentialities, many well-meaning sociologists and philanthropists were amazed to find that this great instrument, which centuries of co-operative effort had perfected, was being used not primarily and predominantly for the service of man, not for the promotion of the common good, but for the exploitation of man by man or rather for the exploitation of the large majority by a small

minority of clever, unscrupulous and selfish persons. Science had made possible large-scale production and tremendous increase of output, partly by the utilization of labour-saving mechanical devices and partly by an elaborate division of labour. The fruits of this industrial development—good in itself—were, however, reaped not by the community as a whole but by those who had control of the instruments of production. Every important labour-saving device should have meant the increase of workers' leisure and the cultural advantages associated with the greater leisure thus made available. Better division of labour, coupled with the use of machinery, should, under reasonable circumstances, have increased general prosperity, making it possible for all to share equitably in the fruits of the scientific planning of industry. But, as a matter of fact, it accentuated economic difficulties, making many industrialists and capitalists enormously rich and denying to the working population even the bare rudiments of civilized living, 'with the result that great riches and great poverty exist side by side, large numbers of people starve in the midst of tantalizing plenty, and unemployment has become a permanent feature of the life of industrialized countries.

Again, Science had enormously improved man's powers of communication and transport, inventing new and incredibly quick means of locomotion, facilitating the movement of people as well as the exchange of ideas. A contemporary seer, with a Wellsian mind, would, no doubt, have prophesied—as many did—great and far-reaching improvements in the lot of man as a result of these new facilities of social intercourse and there is no doubt that many beneficial results did actually follow. But even this gift of science was prostituted to unworthy purposes. Large-scale production, combined with increased individualistic competition, led to an accentuated competition for wealth and great *entrepreneurs*, not content with national markets, began to look about for foreign markets from which they could obtain raw materials under favourable conditions and to which they could export their manufactured goods—again under 'favourable conditions' of trade! This had

undesirable repercussions on the life of a majority of workers in the industrial countries as well as on international politics. After a period of cut-throat competition—which was disastrous for everybody—there was a co-ordination of effort and formation of "combines" amongst the great industrialists and the utilization of their growing and irresistible power to check far-reaching social legislation and the improvement of social services. It is not necessary to enumerate here instances of this policy of social obscurantism on the part of such groups; the history of legislation in almost every country provides numerous such instances. Its international repercussions have been even more disastrous. For, while nationally it *did* increase the total wealth, internationally it only gave a fillip to the policy of imperial exploitation and colonization and, to the desire for conquest and political aggression, it added the much more persistent and dangerous lure of profiteering. The trader usually followed the flag and soon entirely eclipsed his more modest companion, the missionary. Large-sized industry requires, for its profitable running, ever expanding markets, greater accessibility of raw materials and a suppression of actual or rival potential concerns. The last century and a half in the history of Asia and Africa provides a sobering commentary on the inhuman greed of the modern technological industry of the West. What disinterested observers like Morel, Russell and Digby saw in Africa, China and India are but a few facets of this clever and long drawn-out plot to appropriate raw materials, to use political power for the protection of imperial trade interests and arrest the development of indigenous industries in these countries. Of course, there were other alleged motives like 'civilizing the native', 'converting the heathen', 'modernizing the backward East' and manfully bearing 'the white man's burden'. But, these excuses have now worn too thin to serve. As the stress of economic needs becomes stronger and the clash of interests between the ruling and subject nations emerges more clearly into the daylight, it becomes impossible to make people believe in the naive doctrines of trusteeship and stewardship. It is the dynamic of this realization, which, in co-operation with other

factors, has demolished many of the old strongholds of imperialism and colonialism in recent decades.

The vicious circle, however, does not end with this 'peaceful' economic exploitation. What has been grasped unjustly can only be retained by force and there can be no peace or equilibrium in a world where the rule of universally acknowledged international law and justice and fair dealings between nations do not operate. So the power of modern states, both internally and externally, rests primarily on force. Perhaps, even under the best of conditions, so long as there are organized states at all, force will continue to function as a necessary factor in our individual and collective life and the non-violence, which Gandhiji preached, will remain a shining *Ideal* to which the finest spirits will aspire. But the Force which rules the modern world is not the minimum force, looked upon as a necessary evil and used with apology for putting down anti-social elements, which society has failed to reform and re-absorb into its social fabric, or for resisting international aggression which cannot be otherwise checked. It is essentially unrighteous and unjust Force, maintained both internally and externally, for the defence of illegitimate rights, privileges, trade interests and territories. It is used primarily not to redress wrongs—except minor ones in everyday civil life—but in bolstering up major ones like unjust political treaties, the doctrine of race superiority, the sanctity of usurped wealth or the suppression of subject peoples. In the international field, this policy of grab and pillage has led to increasing national jealousies, distrusts and suspicions, and resulted in the suicidal race for armaments which has been a potential as well an actual threat to world peace throughout this half century.

One result of this situation is that Science has been diverted from its creative and constructive part in increasing people's health, prosperity, education and leisure to destructive ends—manufacture of poison gases and other instruments of chemical warfare, new types of tanks and bombing planes and other death dealing monstrosities like the Atom and Hydrogen Bombs which will not only wipe off the poor combatants and

civilians next time but also, let us hope, those war mongers who have so far organized wars from a safe and comfortable distance! Now, in view of this misdirection of Science, there has grown up a school of thought, neither inconsiderable nor unimportant, which holds that the benefits of Science have been greatly over-rated and that, instead of adding to man's true happiness and culture, it has increased his greed and capacity for exploitation and thus produced new tensions and conflicts and unhappiness. Some of them derive their aversion to science from their general philosophy of life which believes in simplicity, in the restriction of wants and in rejecting mere 'multiplicity of things' as undesirable. They would see modern Science and Industry cheerfully swept away and welcome a return to the primitive conditions of a simple rural economy based on handicrafts. For them, industrial civilizations—whether modern or ancient—are almost wholly evil, and militate against the spiritual development of mankind. There are others who have been so overwhelmed by the destructive and inhuman uses to which science has been put in war and industry that they would rather leash this dangerous monster than allow it to play havoc with the life and happiness of millions. Many years ago, an influential body of American thinkers expressed the opinion that "Science should be given a holiday"—I think it was for ten years—during which all scientific research should be stopped. Since then much water has passed under the bridge and billions have been spent on scientific research devoted to perfecting the techniques of destruction. The latest result of this perversion is the development of nuclear weapons, unholy offsprings of Science and Devilry, which has brought this whole issue to the forefront of our mind in an imperious manner. The question that we must, therefore, answer is: What attitude should India adopt towards Science—India, which has traditionally stood for and cherished peace and the riches of the spirit as ultimate values which appear to be threatened today by the uncontrolled impact of Science on our life? If we are going to take Science into our scheme of life, what reply are we to give to these critics?

It seems obvious to me that we cannot cast out Science from our life in this Age. Even many of those, who are opposed to the increasing domination of Science over our life, would not go to the length of advocating that we should not avail ourselves of its wholly beneficial labour-saving devices like the flush system or the power driven cars and railway engines or its instruments for increasing and facilitating human intercourse like the radio and the telephone or its remarkable achievements in alleviating misery and pain through the progress made in medicine and surgery. I think their objection applies mainly to its use in economic and industrial life, where, as we have seen, it has become a powerful means of exploitation, and in war where it has become an irresistible force for destruction. While we cannot possibly countenance either exploitation or destruction as elements in our social structure, we must ask ourselves whether they are the inevitable concomitants of scientific progress or the result of factors that have no inevitable connection with Science as such. On a clear understanding of this issue will depend our attitude to Science and Scientific education in future India.

What is precisely the meaning and place of Science in human life and thought? Science represents an attempt on the part of man's mind to understand the forces operating in the physical universe and to make use of these forces for his ends. Without such knowledge he would be, as he was for numerous centuries, at the mercy of these forces, a plaything of unknown 'demons' that he can neither understand nor propitiate. So the spirit of man went out questing for the 'why and wherefore' of the phenomena by which he is surrounded and, in this exciting adventure, he has developed a special technique which involves patient study, mental application, unbiassed appraisal of data and results in the relentless pursuit of truth. Through the use of this 'Scientific method' he rises above the groping, rule-of-thumb procedures, superstitions and obscurantism, and learns not to accept anything which cannot be proved to the satisfaction of his rational intellect. Thus, with patience and hard work, he has gradually built up this great empire of Science with its many dominions

—Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Medicine, Agriculture, etc.—and while some scientists labour ceaselessly to extend the boundaries of this empire, others are engaged in the application of Science to the practical needs of mankind. The two groups are not, of course, mutually exclusive but the latter is primarily responsible for the *technological* developments that have increased man's productive power beyond calculation and have, incidentally, brought many disturbing consequences in their train.

Now, if this analysis is generally correct, it follows that Science, by itself, is responsible neither for the evils of capitalism nor the destructive orgy of modern warfare. Like other powerful forces and instruments, its actual use is determined by the user who decides the objectives and purposes of his individual and collective activity. You can, to give a homely example, use a current of electricity to light a bulb or to electrocute a human being or to detonate a bomb for the destruction of a town. The solution of our problem, therefore, is not to scrap existing hydro-electric plants or to veto plans of hydro-electric development. The Atom Bomb and the T. V. A. Project both had their development in the U. S. A.—the one a menace not only to peace but to the very survival of civilization; the other a harbinger of prosperity and cultural opportunity to people of a neglected and backward area. Our business is to ensure that the wielders of power have the social vision to use the powers gifted by Science for the common good and work under vigilant democratic control so that the temptation to usurp power for selfish ends is not allowed to corrupt them. The implications of this demand are profound and far-reaching. They call for nothing less than the reconstruction of the world on more just and rational economic and social bases! So long as the present power rivalries and the exploitation of whole classes and nations continues, there will be legitimate excuse for explosive dissatisfaction on the part of groups of people who have been deprived of their full human rights. Power will continue to be utilized for destructive ends, i.e. for economic and military wars, for group exploitation, for the establishment

of the sway of Might over Right. The problem, therefore, is *not so much one of making Science safe for the world as of making the world safe for Science.* In a just, ordered, rational and humane world, Science will not suffer that moral and financial frustration which is its everyday lot today through misdirection of effort and resources. It can, and will, become a force wholly for the good, giving men increasing power, leisure, confidence and understanding, enabling them to see more clearly through the mental fog which arises out of their passions and prejudices and obscures their clarity of vision.

But the creation of such a world is no easy task. It will tax the creative energy, the judgment and the generous enthusiasm of the best spirits of our age and perhaps of ages to come, for it requires both the reconstruction of the external fabric of our life as well as re-education of our ideas, loyalties and emotions on saner lines. Without the impulsive force of great ideals and visions—such as Religion at its best can give—the will to such a reconstruction cannot succeed. On the other hand, mere ideals will not themselves carry us far, for unless we can create a favourable *milieu* for their realization, they are apt to become feeble and ineffective. We have certainly to arouse the highest idealism and faith of which people are capable, especially in the leaders of such reconstruction. But we must also create for the masses of humanity a set of living conditions that would reclaim them from their semi-brutish existence, and enable them to lead decent, secure, civilized and reasonably happy lives. Thus alone can we pave the way for an ever larger number of men and women to cherish and value the things of the spirit. Too many material possessions may, as the Eastern sages have wisely taught, stifle the creative urge of the spirit but there is no evidence to show that, in the average man and woman, creativity goes hand in hand with poverty and disease and ignorance! It is in combating *these* and making them disappear from human life, as far as possible, that a released and liberated Science will find its first and noblest field of activity. If we are to utilize Science in India, our objectives must be clearly defined in some such terms and they should include, in order of

priority, improvement of health, abolition of gruelling poverty and the dissemination of education and culture for which so far the modern scientific media have been hardly used to any appreciable extent.

Increased production of goods—food, clothing, machinery and a thousand other things—is linked up with the profit motive and, in any scheme of industrialization, there is always the danger that precedence may be given *not* to things that people desperately need but to enterprises which bring the quickest and highest returns to the investors. Our National Government must insist that, here as elsewhere, *first things shall come first*, and scientific research will address itself to problems which concern the health and well-being of the common man. Thus Education and Health services and the activities of the Food Department must be given top priority and other technical developments, however important in themselves and whatever influential advocacy they may claim, should not take precedence over them.

The greatest contribution of modern Science on the practical side is that it has retrieved mankind from the gloomy twilight of the Age of Scarcity and shown the way to an Age of Plenty, in which *all* can share—thereby opening out to them the *possibility* of a better and richer life and eliminating the root causes of mutual conflicts and exploitation. This is true in spite of the food shortage and other physical miseries which stare mankind in the face today. They are due not to the impotence of Science but to the aftermath of an insanely destructive war and lack of international goodwill and co-operation which keeps militarism alive and relegates constructive activities of peace into the background. With the development of Atomic energy for constructive ends, an era of unlimited possibilities has opened out for mankind, provided it has the good sense and the imagination to avoid its destructive perils. We must constantly remind ourselves that the liquidation of poverty is a vast and complicated problem and involves a long-range and many-sided programme of industrial development, agricultural reconstruction, training of efficient personnel and the elimination of the heart-breaking waste

which besets every aspect of our national life. In the working out of this programme, which is impossible without scientific education and the use of scientific resources, we have to guard against the possibility of its fruits being monopolized by Big Business while the masses of people remain steeped in poverty.

I do not, therefore, think that India or any other country can afford to reject this great gift of Science on the plea that it is attended with serious risks. The human spirit has achieved its greatest triumphs in all fields of endeavour not by adopting an attitude of defeatism or rejecting new advances in thought, because of their attendant dangers, but by courageously facing and overcoming dangers. So far as India is concerned, I have the hope that our people will not prostitute science to the ends of destruction because, in spite of the excesses into which we have been betrayed from time to time by the pressure of political happenings, we are essentially men of peace and our genius is inclined to express itself along constructive and humane avenues.

We have, at the head of the National Government, men who are pledged to raise the material and cultural standards of the masses and some of them have the vision and the courage to fight against the forces of reaction and fanaticism that block the way to that goal. They cannot achieve their object, till they mobilize all the resources of modern science to exploit our lands and rivers, our forests and mines, our men and women, for the service of the common good. Scientific education must, therefore, find a place of honour in their Plans.

But it must also be remembered that Governments are not always either stable or reliable and, in democratic states, their complexion can be changed overnight. This means that our scientists should *themselves* develop a broad social vision and should insist that their contributions to knowledge are pressed into the service of humane and socially beneficent purposes and are not allowed to be monopolized or misused either by capitalists or by militarists. Should a situation ever arise in India when such a danger threatens to materialize, scientists (and intellectuals generally) should register their

emphatic dissent and their *practical* protest against such misuse of science.

In conclusion, I should like to revert to a point to which I have already made a reference in passing—the significance of the scientific spirit and technique. Science is much more than a technique of material production; it is also an intellectual discipline, an attitude of the mind, a well defined method of approach to the problems of life. A truly scientific mind is opposed to superstition and bias; its reaction to a situation is not emotional, which often implies an unreasoned approach directed by irrational considerations. It is courageously and uncompromisingly *rational;* it looks for truth with all its consequences, however dangerous; it rejects all shibboleths and slogans which deceive and misguide the ordinary man—nationalism, communalism, racialism, etc.—because it does not find any valid justification for them.

One of the greatest, if not *the* greatest, argument in favour of a *genuine scientific education* is that, through it, we can retrieve the minds of the people from the many irrational fears and prejudices in which they are entangled so that they may view their social and economic problems also from a rational and unbiassed angle. Thus it can be of real value to us only when it irradiates our entire outlook, when it is not merely confined to the laboratory but guides our whole material life and our approach to social problems.

To overhaul the system of scientific education in the country is, indeed, a difficult business. One knows of scientists who may be outstanding in their special fields but are blind and irrational as bats outside. They may have received training in *scientific method*, but have had no genuine *scientific education.* Our scientific education will have to be thoroughly overhauled in the light of this criticism. In our Schools and Colleges, students tinker with a few test tubes and measurements, visualizing science as a laboratory issue; they are ignorant of its wider implications in everyday life and everyday conduct. They are not being given scientific education at all; they are only learning a dull and bookish subject to pass an examination. Unless generous facilities are provided

for the teaching of Science and it is pervaded by something of the spirit which that great English Headmaster, Sanderson, introduced in his school at Oundle it will remain inert and infructuous, neither fertilizing social life nor quickening the human mind.

I would, therefore, make a strong plea to all those who are concerned with the teaching of Science, at different stages, to consider carefully the real objectives of scientific education and overhaul their methods and approach accordingly. I am not qualified to go into the details of methodology. But it should be clear to anyone conversant with modern educational ideas that this would mean the use of more active and practical methods of teaching in schools, so that students may acquire something of the dynamic spirit of science which is inquisitive and uncompromising in the pursuit of truth. In the Colleges and the Universities, it would demand a study and appreciation of the social implications and objectives of Science so that the students may realize that it is not just a formal and technical subject but something that impinges dynamically on their life and thought and can be used to guide human development into beneficent channels. So while, on the one hand, it will increase man's productivity and control over nature and reduce his suffering, it will bring him other invaluable gifts in its train—a fine critical spirit, a dispassionate judgment, reverence, a sense of freedom and adventure into the high-ways and by-ways of life. Surely, these are gifts which no one dare reject or scorn, for they can enrich the life of man beyond measure.

XIX

THE EDUCATIONAL APPROACH TO PEACE

I

As one thinks of the problem of Peace in this Age, one thinks inevitably of Mahatma Gandhi, the modern apostle of Peace, who strove to bring it about through measures which can only be described as educational in the widest sense of the word.

One of the essential characteristics of a truly great man is the *unity* that he achieves in his personality so that his entire life and thought become irradiated by a single, steady light. There are then no complications of a split personality in him, no contradictions and dualisms trying to achieve an unstable and uncomfortable harmony. His heart and mind, body and spirit all function in unison. All that he says and does, all that he lives for and dies for bear the impress of his great central purpose. A true man of God is described in the Holy Quran as one whose "prayer and pilgrimage, life and death are all for God, who is the Lord of the universe". The man of religion finds the centre of this inner unity in his love for, and devotion to, God. Others may find it elsewhere—in Knowledge or Art or Social Service—but it is essential that there should be such a unifying force which will enable them to act in different contexts and situations in the light of certain general principles, ideals and values. It is only from this inner unity that they can derive their strength and their faith.

Mahatma Gandhi had achieved this unity in his mental and spiritual life. I use the word 'achieved' advisedly because it is not something that comes naturally and without effort and struggle as one gets one's complexion or one's intelligence

quotient. It has to be cultivated through self-discipline, self-denial and self-restraint, through overcoming attractive temptations, through the direction of unorganized forces and energies into selected channels. I think it can be rightly claimed that the central mission of Gandhiji's life, for which he had assiduously prepared himself, was Peace—Peace based on understanding and love. There is a kind of Peace, in the national and international field, which can be imposed on people through superior force—what has been called 'the peace of the graveyard'. All periods of history provide instances of such peace. Gandhiji was not interested in such a peace. He had not the power and the resources for imposing such a peace and, even if he had, he would not have cared to use them! For, such peace does not sublimate or eliminate the aggressive tendencies and the repressed complexes which lead to war—it only drives them underground where they remain active and uneasy, like the lava seething under a volcano, ready to burst forth whenever they get a chance. Like all great teachers of mankind—as distinguished from power-seeking politicians and administrators—Gandhiji was primarily concerned with creating the social and psychological conditions that would favour the growth of peace-mindedness in the people of India and the peoples of the world. Long before Attlee made his now famous remark at the opening of the Preparatory Unesco Conference—"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed"—long before it, Gandhiji had given a whole life-time to the cause of building "defences of peace" in the hearts and minds of his countrymen. How far he did actually succeed in doing so is difficult to assess, for there are always numerous factors, some quite unpredictable, which condition and determine the success of a movement. But one can perhaps sense something of his epic achievement by pondering over two questions. What would have been the pattern of India's political struggle and how much bloodshed and violence would have occurred if the leadership of the movement had not been in the hands of Gandhiji? Secondly, what awful proportions would the fratricidal, communal war

have attained after the partition of the country, if Gandhiji had not been there to stake his precious life to put out the roaring fire?

If we study the story of his life, we find that he was determined from the outset to fight violence in all forms and at all cost—against British Imperialism in India because it did violence to the right of the Indians to be free and to work out their own destiny; against the cruel rigidity of the caste system because it did violence to the innate rights of the Harijans as human beings; against communalism because it discriminated against individuals on irrelevant and insidious grounds and thus violated the inherent rights of the individual who should be the real objective of social solicitude; against ruthless capitalism, indiscriminate urbanization and large-scale industrialization because they militated against the happiness and the building up the good life for workers and peasants. Against these and many other minor forms of violence he threw the great force of his remarkable and many-sided personality; against them he waged his constant, uncompromising war. But this war was tempered with that rare and sensitive humanism which can distinguish bewteen the crime and the criminal, between the system and its agents, between the evil that men do and the men that do the evil. Against the former was pitted the full strength of his righteous indignation and his capacity for organized resistance. But he had nothing except pity and sympathy and a sense of fellowship with the latter. His technique aimed at reforming the system or righting the evil in such a way as to reform the evil-doer in the process. The whole moral basis of *Satyagraha* is the determination to fight against evil with weapons that are good and clean, to offer a type of resistance which will not aggravate the conflict and the hostility but tend to bring about a change of heart in the opponent. He insisted on '*Ahimsa*' (non-violence) not merely because he thought it was wrong to shed blood and take brutal vengeance, but also because he realized that '*Himsa*' (violence) sets up a vicious, unending cycle of vengeance and counter-vengeance which degrades the quality of human life without solving the problem at issue. So he

decided to keep the fight, so far as it lay in his power, on the difficult and narrow path of non-violence. In an age of scepticism and unbelief when people are not prepared to have faith in anything except the tangible display of brute force, is it not something of a political *as well as moral* miracle that India should have been able to liquidate the British stranglehold through a political struggle which was, on the whole, bloodless, and Gandhiji's act of faith should have been justified by the reaction that the transfer of political power produced on the relationship between the Indians and the Britishers? No intelligent, hard-headed politician or administrator in India or Great Britain or elsewhere, was at first prepared to countenance the idea—these 'hard-headed' people have a knack of agreeing amongst themselves!—that a great country like India could be freed without violence and bloodshed and they scoffed at the idea of 'passive resistance' achieving anything. (They speak in the same accents today about prospects of Peace and War in the world and believe in piling up armaments and planning destruction on a planetary scale instead of trying out a decent, human and moral approach.) What has actually happened has confounded their hard-headed wisdom and triumphantly vindicated Gandhiji's position. It has shown that not only can several million people fight on something like a moral and non-violent plane—in so far as that is humanly possible—but also (and this is more important) an Imperialist power, with an entirely different philosophical and political outlook, can respond to it with an appropriate gesture and thus demolish, in a large measure, the legacy of bitterness, hatred and conflict which a hundred years of foreign rule had built up. I am aware that there were other international forces and practical considerations which hastened India's release from political bondage. But no one will seriously challenge the view that if Gandhiji had not been there, the pattern as well as the timing of India's freedom would have been very different indeed. Gandhiji's success is a practical demonstration, on an impressive and monumental scale, of the efficiency of his technique and soundness of his approach in the field of international politics and world peace.

II

The truth for which Gandhiji stood was never more urgently needed than it is in the complicated and heart-rending set-up of the modern world today. He repudiated the way of war and bloodshed as an approach to Peace and, unless the world as a whole adopts the approach—and quickly at that—there is no way for it out of its quickly gathering doom. Wars and conquests, leading to the forcible imposition of the conqueror's will on the conquered, have seldom if ever produced any lasting beneficial effects. But, in the past, they *did* sometimes solve certain limited issues and problems and they did not certainly cause havoc on the universal scale that they do now. Modern wars are an entirely different affair. They have no well-defined frontiers; they overflow into every aspect of life; they abolish the distinction between the armies and the civilian population and they disrupt every sphere of normal activity. The victors and the vanquished both suffer almost equally grievously from the after effects of the wars—as we have seen only too poignantly through the experience of our own generation though that would be like a picnic compared to the misery that a nuclear war would bring in its train. And, I repeat, *they neither do, nor can, solve satisfactorily any problems* for which they are ostensibly waged. In fact, they create many more and, sooner or later, the belligerents have to sit down round a table and try to use their reason instead of their machine guns and their bombing planes. But, even at the conference table, they are now unable to do anything reasonable, because some implacable nemesis dogs their footsteps. The fears, the suspicions, the racial and national hatreds which had plunged them into war become aggravated during the terrible ordeal and, when they try to thrash out problems of Peace, they are unable to bring either dispassionate judgment or decent human feelings or even intelligent self-respect to bear on the situation. So, unless we can find a way out of the impasse by cutting this vicious circle of hate and unreason, neither wars nor peace parleys carried on by war mongers, can avail anything.

During the life-time of a single generation, we have had the unenviable distinction of seeing twice the spectacular drama of violence and destruction on an international scale and if it has demonstrated and proved anything incontestably, it has proved the folly and criminality of violence as a method of settling international disputes and problems. If I may speak about things nearer home—because they illustrate the general truth—during the last few years the consequences of violence have been driven home to us more specifically through tears and blood and disgrace. Did all this holocaust of hate and fury and violence contribute anything to the settlement either of the Hindu-Muslim problem or the Pakistan-Hindustan problem? Put in cold print, the question sounds rhetorical, if not silly. But that is not so. Many persons believed—and many more behaved—as if it were a rational approach. I remember many persons—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs—saying in the threat-laden months of early 1947 that a "nice" all-out fight between the communities in the Punjab was not only unavoidable but 'necessary to clear the atmosphere' and then things will 'settle down'. The 'fight' did come—as nice and thorough as the most vicious person could wish for—and it did clear the atmosphere—clear it of reason, sanity, decency, chivalry and good-fellowship! Its bitter fruits can be seen in the millions of homes uprooted, in the great and irreplaceable loss of life and property, in the bitter legacy of pain and hate and despair that it left in its trail and, above all, in the denial by many persons (for the time being at least) of values that make life gracious and meaningful. It succeeded only in accentuating communal feelings and poisoning inter-dominion relations and it may take us a whole generation—or more?—to deal with these legacies. If there is a slow return to sanity and moral normalcy—and, thank God, there is!—it is due entirely to forces, influences and personalities which had always stood against these war mongers and fanatics with blood-stained minds. Still there are people, who talk openly of the possibility of war and they do so not always with apprehension or righteous horror but almost with gusto, as of something inevitable which had better be taken up and done with! It

is sobering to remember, however, that in this matter, this situation reflects only *faintly* the war-mongering mentality that obsesses all the peoples of the world today. Everywhere there is a constant talk of war as if it could not be possibly avoided and its assured inevitability is used to justify the war hysteria, the mendacious propaganda, the unscrupulous political alignments and the race for the most deadly and diabolical weapons of destruction which one finds going on in most countries! In fact, quite a large part of this unhappy globe has been actually caught up—since the War 'ended'!—in the flames of many 'small' wars—in Tibet, Indo-China and Korea in the Far East, in Kashmir and Palestine and Egypt in the Middle East, in Greece and Berlin and Hungary in the West. So many countries are ablaze today with what are somewhat ironically called 'civil' wars. Where, on earth, is the Peace for which the last Great War had exacted more sacrifices from the peoples of the Earth than they had ever made in history for any other cause?

One would have thought that, after the fiery experience of the last war, humanity would be cured of its craze for war for decades, that no one belonging to this particular generation could think of it without suffering a nervous breakdown, that the world would at last revert to a sober, constructive and peaceful mood in which its main preoccupation would be the re-building of the shattered fabric of society. Not only its material fabric but also the pattern of its moral and social values which had been challenged in the preceding decade and for which millions of men, women and children had lost their lives and many more millions had been reduced to a state of misery from which death itself would be a welcome relief. But is that the mood in which we find the world today? No, it is neither sober nor constructive, neither co-operative nor peaceful. Mutual jealousies and distrust, blindly grasping self-interest, preoccupation with the slick game of power politics and a brutal insensitiveness to the higher values—in spite of the lip service paid to them—characterize the relationship of nations which were only recently engaged in a joint life-and-death struggle against

what they regarded as forces of darkness. New alliances and alignments are being made feverishly, in complete disregard of ideological bases on which the last War is supposed to have been fought, with the sole object of strengthening this or that bloc for the suicidal conflict which obsesses their minds. Nazism and Fascism have been defeated on the battlefield but their underlying ideology and philosophy still reign supreme in the hearts and minds of the nations—and not by any means only the nations which were 'officially' infected with them. They are all bent on perfecting their engines of destruction and have, in fact, achieved such diabolical marvels in this direction that the next War, about which politicians talk so glibly, may quite conceivably wipe out the entire fabric of the civilization that men have built up so laboriously through the centuries, in the teeth of the forces that are always trying to drag them back to the jungle. To any serious and sensitive student of contemporary history this dreadful international scene should give not only food for thought but feverish days and sleepless nights. Men and women of good will can do nothing better—literally *nothing*—or more urgent than trying to educate individuals and nations away from war and into the ways of Peace and they should allow *no* other loyalties —*none* whatever—*to* stand in the way of this crusade. It is a great thing to ask but there is no other alternative and they should be prepared to do so if they genuinely realize all that is at stake. Negatively speaking, civilization cannot exist without it; positively, every constructive effort on behalf of humanity depends for its success on the maintenance and strengthening of Peace as a pre-condition. It is necessary for everyone of us to enquire into, and to ponder over, what he or she can do individually and what we can do collectively to fight this overhanging menace.

Let us not, however, underrate the magnitude or the difficulty of the task. All the passions and phobias and national egotisms as well as the powerful pull of many strong vested interests are ranged on the side of war. It has been exalted in song and story; it has been glorified by history and it can always give a twist to some of man's best and strongest

sentiments and pervert and exploit them for its own nefarious purposes—sentiments like patriotism, national honour, courage, self-sacrifice, discipline.... It is this formidable array of material and psychological allies that has enabled the war mongers to make the people accept an entirely topsy-turvy view of things as reasonable. I wonder how many of us realize the astronomical figures of the expenditure that nations are incurring on preparations for what they call national defence but what is in reality the next war. If one can grasp their magnitude—and I confess I cannot!—a few figures will be revealing. The U. S. Government spent in 1947-48 about 10,000 million dollars (!) on national defence—this works out at about 30 per cent of its total national budget. Not to be outdone, the Soviet Government is spending about the same amount. Again, according to one reliable authority, the United States is spending over 500 million dollars* a year on atomic research directly related to the preparation of the atomic bomb and there is no reason to doubt that other big powers are also doing their worst in this field. And it is not only a question of money but also of men—the finest and most highly trained scientific personnel—who are locked up in furthering this gruesome game of destruction. Released from the paralysing fear of war and with all these resources in men and money at their disposal for peaceful projects, what could not modern nations do for the enrichment of the common man's material and cultural life?

The use of the atomic energy in the service of constructive purposes could, according to cautious scientific estimates, alter the entire pattern of our life, transforming this world of Scarcity into a world of Plenty. There is nothing in the way of the general improvement of standards which is beyond man's power today, if he had the will and the good sense to utilize the gifts of Science properly. And it is obviously impossible to assess, in quantitative terms, the moral and psychological impact of this changed atmosphere on the mind

* These figures have been taken from Dr. Richard Weiss's monograph "There is yet time", and must by now have become dated underestimates.

and the behaviour of the peoples of the world or the extent of the release of creative impulses that may follow from it. Life may acquire a deeper meaning, a fuller content and a richer purpose than it has had throughout this harassed century or even before.... Thus while the difficulties and hurdles in the path are undoubtedly staggering, the prizes that the conquest of peace offers are even greater and we have to mobilize all material and psychological resources, all long-term and short-term measures for this purpose. Humanism, enlightened self-interest, the highest traditions of religion and ethics, the inescapable implications of modern economy and technology—all demand it. And in any case, what other alternative course of action is there for any decent human being to follow?

So we have to consider the question: What is the way out of this impasse? How can we try to heal the wounds of the body and the spirit which wars and group conflicts have inflicted on humanity so that they may not seek to perpetuate themselves through the violence of revenge? In dealing with this issue, it is necessary to remember that, while the *magnitude* of the present-day problem is infinitely greater, the problem itself is not new. The best minds of all ages have always endeavoured to control and sublimate the aggressive and warlike tendencies of men and groups. The fact that the modern army uses the Atom Bomb and the Spitfire, instead of the rifle or the old time bow-and-arrow, is profoundly important from the point of view of its *results*, but the *motivation* in both cases is the same—the desire to settle difference or attain one's objectives and interests through the use of force rather than through good-tempered discussion and understanding. So, is it not possible that the right approach to the problem may not be something startlingly new but something quite startlingly old—a reaffirmation of the values and methods of psychic health which have been advocated persistently in the past, even though their methods of application may be different because the circumstances of the present age are different? The problem of Peace is essentially the problem of changing the motives and sentiments of individuals and groups. But these cannot be changed in a vacuum, as it were, through a

purely didactic or educational approach. We must also change the circumstances, the play of forces in the socio-economic order which foster these motives and sentiments. So the problem is both psychological and sociological. It has to do with the thoughts and feelings of the people, no doubt, but it has its roots also in the material structure and stresses of our civilization and must be tackled on both fronts simultaneously. I shall now proceed to examine these two aspects briefly.

III

In dealing with the causes of war, there is often a tendency to over-stress either the subjective or the objective factors and thus over-simplify the picture. This often renders the measures which are adopted for the purpose of arresting wars and the warlike mentality ineffective. All of us who are interested in a study of the problem of Peace and War must understand the complex interplay of forces that bring about the war-like mentality and utlimately precipitate wars. We have to win the active co-operation of the peoples in this cause and mobilize all persons of good will who are in a position to influence public opinion—authors and journalists, speakers on the religious and political platform, the modern media of mass communication like the film, the radio and the theatre—and, if they are to pull their full weight, they must be correctly and fully informed of the forces operative in this field. My object here is to elucidate, so far as I can, the repercussions and interplay of these forces at the level of the common man who has to be mobilized eventually for the defence of Peace.

Let us consider briefly the various types of war that we come across in history, with reference to the motives that prompted them. They are caused by different factors—sometimes operating singly, sometimes in co-operation, with one or the other predominating—and it will not be right to ascribe them all to any particular set of causes. The academic psychologist who explains them only on the basis of the instinct of pugnacity or aggressiveness is really over-simplifying the situation. For, his approach does not explain why, with these

instinctive tendencies being there all the time, wars occur at particular times and places and amongst particular groups or nations. There must be special circumstances which occasion them, which are favourable to their development. In the earliest periods of history, tribal wars were either just a display of brute strength or they were caused by crude and urgent economic needs which could not be denied—groups may be anxious to secure for themselves fertile lands and pasturing grounds or a river feature or a wooded hill or some other natural resources and they may not be able to do so without ousting the group in control or some rival group also aiming at their posssesion. So a war ensues. At a more highly developed stage of history, this grew into what is known as a *lebensraum* theory of war which includes not only the desire to secure 'elbow room' for living—and the elbow is a very elastic entity!—but also many other natural resources required for living well and comfortably. Of course, groups and tribes or nations may sometimes actually need raw materials or natural resources so urgently that they cannot do without them and the neighbours may be unreasonable and so they have to resort to war to secure them. But the theory has also been used to justify unwarranted aggression over and over again. Then there have been what may be called wars of ideologies—the attempt to impose on others by force certain ideas or systems or practices which a particular nation or group may hold as sacred or necessary for the good of the whole world. Such have been the so-called "religious wars" (what a contradiction in terms!) which attempt to decide by force of arms on the battlefield points of doctrine or ethics which could only, *if at all,* be thrashed out in a peaceful and dispassionate discussion. It seems silly to try and decide the truth as between Monotheism and the doctrine of Trinity through a superior display of armed strength. But people have tried to do so! 'Ideological' also was the recent world war which, from one point of view, was a war between democracy and totalitarianism, a trial of strength to decide which of the two was to have the upper hand in the world. Such is also the implacable war that has been going on between Capitalism

and Communism for the last thirty years and which threatens to hurl the world into chaos and destruction. These are predominantly wars of ideologies but it is obvious that many other factors, particularly the clash of economic interests and rivalries, also enter into them. In fact, it may be said that, in the modern period, wars have been caused more and more clearly by economic maladjustments or the desire for economic exploitation and less and less by ideological differences. But, consciously or unconsciously, men as well as nations are apt to dramatize themselves and thus deceive not only others but also sometimes themselves! They would not like to face their own conscience (or world opinion) as wagers of an aggressive or unjust war. So they cloak their real motives—which may be control of markets or appropriation of raw products or exploitation of weaker and backward peoples and thus raising their own standard of living—in fine phrases like patriotism, freedom, social welfare, private enterprise or what you will. So it happens that, while the few clear-eyed but unscrupulous persons at the helm of affairs may know precisely what they are doing and how they stand to gain by precipitating a war—it may be a gamble for political power or redressing the ill-adjusted balance of a bad domestic situation or profiteering through the sale of armaments—millions of well-meaning, essentially peace-loving but foolish persons swallow as truth whatever untruthful and ugly propaganda is carried on in the press, the platform or the radio by the party in power, or by those who mould public opinion. So the ordinary citizen, who is not really anxious or responsible for war, becomes an accessory after the fact through his credulity, his indifference and his failure to understand intelligently the issues that are involved. This is a point of great significance—this responsibility of the individual citizen—to which I shall revert later.

Now, is it possible to visualize these different types of war and their varying causes as part of some common and fundamental psychological phenomenon? Can we trace any similarities between the attitude of the primitive group trying its brute strength against its neighbour, of the religious fanatics who cannot brook any other religious system or ideas, of the

political fanatics who would deny to others the right to hold a different political ideology and of the unscrupulous profiteers and racketeers who would cheerfully sacrifice the good of their own nation and country or the entire human community for the sake of their personal gain in money or power? I think it *is* possible to do so. Take the primitive group that indulges in a pugnacious display of brute strength. Why does it do so? Because it has not the good sense, intellectual or moral, to realize clearly what this blatant "self-expression" on its part means to its weaker adversaries. Again, the so-called 'religious' wars and persecutions reveal a mentality which denies to others the freedom of thought and worship which it enjoys and values for itself. The political and economic wars are obviously due to the desire on the part of some nations to exploit other nations, to appropriate what they can for themselves—natural resources, cheap labour, markets for trade—without regard to the needs and rights of others and without heeding the fact that this will deprive them of the opportunity for full and unfettered development. The fundamental psychological causes are, therefore, seen to be pugnacity, intolerance and exploitation, *all arising out of an insensitiveness to the welfare of others, all based on the failure to recognize, with the magnificent throb of personal realization, the essential and basic fact of our one-ness with our fellow-beings.* To these factors has been added in more recent years, the powerful stimulus of Fear, the constant fear of an over-hanging war which warps the vision and distorts the thinking of all nations and throws them pell mell into a race for armaments and all those distrusts, suspicions, intrigues which characterize modern international relations. Thus we see that wars are the result of certain moral and psychological causes which operate, in the words of John Cohen, "under specific social and economic conditions, and, in the total situation, from the point of view of control, the conditions are of primary and the causes of secondary importance".* The problem of

* John Cohen in his *Human Nature, War and Society,* quoted by E. W. Aryanayakam in his speech at the All-India Pacifist Conference at Rasulia.

abolishing war, therefore, bears (I repeat) a twofold aspect—how to eradicate the psychological causes which create the warlike mentality and how to change the material circumstances which form a favourable soil for its growth and display. While as thinkers, teachers, writers we may be concerned more directly with the former, nothing will be gained by belittling the latter. We must size up the situation in its entirety so that our efforts may be both intelligent and commensurate with the magnitude of the task.

Let us first examine briefly some of the relevant objective factors of the contemporary international scene which determine the nature and implications of modern war. They are being constantly stressed by speakers and writers but they will bear repetition because they are still far from being accepted as the basis of our everyday thought, feeling and activity. Modern science and the development of the incredibly rapid means of transport and communications have conquered both space and time. Distance has shrunk to negligible proportions; we are in actual fact living in a much smaller world than ever before. And it is not only a smaller world but, in the now famous words of Wendell Wilkie, "one world" in which the interests and the welfare of all the peoples have become so intermixed that they can no longer be regarded as independent or isolated. A famine, an epidemic, a war, the menace of an Atom Bomb merely high-light, in a striking manner, this persistent, undeniable fact of the inter-dependence of groups and nations. But it is equally true of our everyday human life. For this Age, peace and war have both become global; they are one and indivisible. We can no more isolate ourselves from what is happening in the world around us than we can insulate ourselves in our homes when a virulent epidemic is raging in our neighbourhood. Any maladjustment in the world economy, any upsetting of the political or economic equilibrium, any wanton act of aggression in one part of the world makes itself felt in all other parts. A war stars in Europe and, by a long and circuitous but inevitable sequence of causes, three million die in Bengal and many find themselves uprooted from their homes and cut off from their normal

occupations and from all that makes life pleasant, gracious and meaningful. A flood in China that spoils the rice crop may cause lakhs of persons to die of starvation in some quite distant parts of the world; influenza or typhus in the battle-fields of Europe may lay bare whole regions in Asia and Africa. Now, these are facts that every intelligent man knows —he talks about them, he hears about them, he reads about them—but they do not colour his feelings, or inspire his thinking or control his actions. They remain only at the level of cognitive knowledge. In normal times, he shows sympathy and concern about them, but as soon as an emergency arises or war hysteria starts or 'nationalism' and 'patriotism' run amuck—it always pays some people to bring about that state of mind!—he throws overboard the 'sentimental' and 'idealistic' cargo of internationalism and humanism and peace and you find him—and millions like him—in the ranks of the cheering lunatics and goose-steppers. That is why it is essential that we should use all educational media and resources to weave correct ideas and ideals about human relationships into the pattern of our thought and action. In literal truth, we must *think* and *act* internationally in this 'one world' of ours or perish. And we can do neither till we are educated to *feel* internationally, for it is emotion that provides the dynamic power for all purposeful and persistent behaviour. It follows, therefore, that the approach must be made simultaneously on the intellectual, the active and the emotional plane.

Another characteristic of the modern age which all students of human problems and affairs must keep in mind is that it is an age of democracy—not, indeed, in the sense that it has achieved full democracy but that it is striving, with many reverses and set-backs, towards a democratic social order. The recent defeat of Fascism after its interlude of unholy triumph, lends support to this view. No doubt this democracy is imperfect—in many countries it has given the vote to all without that social equality and economic justice which can put real meaning into the vote. But it is certainly an instrument with the help of which we may hope to forge a better future and redress some of the inequalities and injus-

tices which disfigure our present social economy. And, in spite of all these imperfections, democracy does imply that, in the ultimate analysis, the will of the people should prevail—at least in times of great crises, as happened, for instance, when British public opinion turned out Chamberlain's Government. Now, *this* is an important point. It means that even for waging a war it is necessary in a democracy to court the people's approval—may be, by seducing their passions, but it has to be done, and in this fact is embedded a ray of hope. For, it is usually the common man who craves for peace and the demagogue, the profiteer or the expansionist who wants war and tries to win the masses over to his view in order to work out his nefarious purposes. If the masses were educated intelligently so that they could discriminate between what is good and what is harmful for them, if we could stiffen their resistance to the glib salesmanship of the merchants of death, there would be some possibility of defeating them and arresting the chances of war. This again is ultimately an educational problem. I know that many persons are apt to belittle the importance of educating the individual because they believe in, and are obsessed by the great collective forces that seem to control human destiny. But that attitude of mind implies a conscious or unconscious contempt for individuality which is the antithesis of all humanism and all ethical and religious teaching.

There is yet another characteristic of this Age with which we have to reckon—its glaring economic anomalies, its unashamed exploitation of weaker groups, its failure to provide material and cultural riches for a majority of the people, although it has potentially the power to do so. No doubt, exploitation has always beset the collective life of man but the scientific organization of industry and the growth of capitalism and imperialism during the last one hundred and fifty years have greatly accentuated this tendency and the contrasts today are more galling than ever. In the past, people were often apt to regard their poor and miserable lot as the decree of an inexorable and unfeeling Fate about which they could do nothing! They lived, as I have pointed out, in an

Age of Scarcity, in which there were not enough material and cultural goods to go round, and inevitably there was a scramble for them and whole nations and classes of people suffered in consequence. But, thanks to the advances in science and the technique of production, it has become possible *for the first time in human history,* to ensure reasonable comfort, material security and cultural amenities for all the peoples of the earth, provided we have the good-will and the common sense to organize our work and economy on a rational and co-operative basis. It has been estimated, for instance, that four hours' work a day, in a five-day week, could provide all the necessary goods and services needed for mankind, provided every able-bodied person took part in it, and it was so organized that inefficiency and waste were eliminated. And this was, we should remember, the estimate of our productive capacity before Atomic energy, with its limitless possibilities, was discovered! So, while in the past there may have been some justification for the blind irrational struggle for existence, which resulted in wars and class conflicts and material and cultural deprivation, there is no such justification for these things in this Age of Plenty when production has been multiplied a hundred-fold—except, of course, the justification that exists in human greed and stupidity!

We must realize then that, so long as there is want and poverty and ignorance and inequality of opportunity for whole nations and classes and groups, so long as the material and cultural wealth which is the common heritage of mankind is denied to large sections, so long as our conscience tolerates a majority of the people being condemned to lead poor, barren and incomplete lives, there is dangerous dynamite strewn along the pathway of man which may—and often does—destroy all that decades of patient constructive effort had built. It is, therefore, wrong and criminal to assert that war is rooted either in the nature of things or in human nature, that it cannot be outlawed and that it is Utopian to dream of peace as the normal state of the world. War is rooted really in the conditions that have been created by men and above all in the social *injustices which sometimes make it inevitable.*

Unless these conditions are removed, wars with all their deadly dangers and destruction will continue to push mankind relentlessly towards its awful doom.

The last War was fought ostensibly to root out Nazism and Fascism from the world in the optimistic hope that this would also avert or reduce the danger of future wars. But their defeat on the battlefield has by no means repressed the ideas and tendencies which they represented or the approach they adopted to international problems. Why is that so? In his book, "The Yogi and the Commissar", Arthur Koestler has made a remark which brings out a very important point: "Fascism cannot be defeated on the battlefield alone; it has to be defeated inside peoples' brains, hearts and glands; for it is merely a new word for a very old state of mind", and we will do well to ponder over its implications for peace and war. Why is it that with a knowledge of the horrors and futility of war, men revert to it over and over again? What is that "old state of mind", parading under a variety of names, which defeats reason and common sense and all moral and religious considerations and leads to war, with its unimaginable misery?

The basic psychological truth, which underlies wars and all other forms of conflicts and exploitations which beset human society like a cancer, is so simple and fundamental that it is apt to sound like a platitude, and like all great truths, it can only be grasped intuitively. It is, as I have already hinted, failure to appreciate the fact of the *oneness of mankind* which all great prophets, seers, mystics and men of vision have known and felt and preached and all hard-headed practical men of business and politics have either completely over-looked and ignored or sought indignantly to deny. It is true that modern technological developments have brought the peoples of the world into a new and vital interdependence; it is also true that the new weapons of war have made war so frightful that, enlightened self-interest also points to the path of peace. But the economic and material basis of self-interest is not enough; it is a very powerful factor, no doubt, but unless we create in our generation and the generation that is growing up a dynamic and undeniable faith

in the unity of life, in unity between man and man and in unity between the purposes of God and the purposes of man, foundations of enduring Peace cannot be laid. All great religions have been based on this faith—that the apparent separateness of the individuals and groups is permeated by a deeper unity, that their interests and welfare are ultimately one and indivisible because they are all instruments for working out God's increasing purpose. In the words of the Prophet of Islam, "All creation is the Family of God" and "He who digs a pit for his brother man himself falls into it". In the allegory of Oscar Wilde's '*Picture of Dorian Gray*', we find the dagger which Dorian Gray hurls at his portrait lodged in his own breast! The common belief that each individual has an entirely separate, walled-off existence, that each individuality is like a separate island, which can communicate with others only through certain crude channels of communication and on the basis of self-interest, is really both false and dangerous. I have had occasion earlier to refer to Dr. Richard Weiss's thoughtful monograph "There is Yet Time". It is refreshing to find that he has adopted the same approach in considering this question. He points out that acting on the assumption, and in the interest, of an individual's separate existence always tends to blur one's vision and to make one see things in twisted proportoins. We are then apt to fight for this illusion of separate existence and '*struggling for survival we forget life*'.

"To make the war of weapons cease completely, some realization is necessary of the fact that the war of weapons is an expression of a struggle constantly waged in other fields and exploding into war when the heat and tension of that struggle of separate interests reaches a certain degree of intensity.

"If catastrophe is to be averted, war must cease completely and if it is to cease completely we must see, must at least begin to see, through the illusion of separateness out of which conflict is born in all spheres of life. Each one of us walks shrouded in many shells: race, nationality, sex, profession, religion, material and mental possessions, the memories of the

past and he says 'I am this', 'I am that', 'I have enjoyed these pleasures', 'I have suffered those pains', and he forgets that which has no name, no bounds.... Do we know what peace means? Do we not fight all the time? Do we not try to achieve peace by means which are permeated by the spirit of war? It is said that people are tired of war. Are they tired of war or tired of the sufferings caused by war?... If it were a revulsion from war, the whole attitude to war exploits, to military glory and military training would change."

If we ponder over these remarks we shall be able to see the intimate relationship between our everyday life and thought and *their spectacular dramatization in the form of war.* People fail to realize and appreciate the fact that our individual ways of life, as we practise them from day to day, our behaviour towards our families and friends, our attitudes to our superiors and our subordinates, our conduct in business and local affairs determine, in the long run, the crucial issues of war and peace. It is a kind of fatalistic determinism which ascribes wars and other great ills, to which mankind is heir, to some remote collective causes—as if these collective causes had a separate existence, divorced from our individual actions and motives! Unless, through education and through the tragic stress of world forces and world events, we realize by honest and relentless self-examination, the fact of individual responsibility—not as an academic thesis but each one of us realizing his own criminal responsibility for bringing about the present state of things—we shall be content with measures and policies to bring about peace which would at best be palliatives, not offering any radical and permanent cure for the malady from which we are suffering. We have to break through the many "shells" in which our individuality is encased and, if I may so put it, make its essential core speak to the core of all other individualities across the boundaries of space and time. The "shells" have their own limited uses and they create their own limited loyalties which are good in their place—loyalty to one's family, one's nation, one's country, one's community, one's profession and what not. It is the *ordering* of these loyalties that has gone wrong; obsessed by what is

near and indecently insistent—the claim of the group or the caste or the class or the colour or the creed—we have forgotten that our greatest and most imperative loyalty is to the unity and the good of mankind as a whole, that anything which comes in the way of that supreme loyalty is wrong and immoral and that all other loyalties should operate within its wider context.

So the right educational approach would lead to a repudiation of the conscious or unconscious assumption of our individual, irreconcilable separateness and a dynamic appreciation of the fact that all life is sacred, that the good of one and the good of all are not necessarily contradictory but may well be identical in a reasonable world, that one's duties as an Indian or American or Russian or Chinese or German or Jew harmonize with, and are not different from, those as a decent *human being*, and where they do not so coincide, one must prefer to act as a decent human being rather than as member of a particular national or racial or communal or professional group. This is no doubt a very difficult state of mind to bring about; some may well argue that it is impossible. But that is not so. I have no doubt that, at the stage of human evolution when the tribe or the local community claimed its members' exclusive devotion, there must have been people who shook their head sadly and prophesied that it would be impossible to develop anything like a national loyalty which would transcend tribal and class loyalties. However, we find that national loyalty has become an accepted everyday fact —often a troublesome and obstinately jealous fact—and this has come about as a response to the changed situation in the world. Today the world stands perilously poised over the precipice of another great change—a change from a world divided into fairly separate and isolated national groups to a world which has been irresistibly knit into an integral unit. In fact, this change has been actually accomplished on the physical, the geographical, the technological and the economic plane, but the psychology of individuals and nations has not been adjusted to this new set-up. Our scientific and technical advances have enabled us to conquer the separateness of space

and the separateness of national needs but the historical tyrannies that control our mind—our prejudices, our fears, our superstitions, our complexes, our phobias—are still functioning actively. The greatest task of education, to my mind, is the conquest of these tyrannies so that the adult of today—and more so the child, as he develops into the adult of tomorrow—shall be able to see the new world that has come into being with clear, unclouded eyes for what it is and adjust his ideas, his emotions and his conduct to it. We cannot possibly build up a reasonable life-pattern in the mid-twentieth century—which has heralded the Atomic age—with ideas and attitudes and values developed in the 19th century and attuned to its needs.

This, however, is the general problem and it can only be solved if the minds of our teachers, our social workers, our political and religious leaders are adjusted to this change. But, there is another aspect of the question also. How is this new orientation to be brought about? How are we to change the rooted habits of feelings and thought in large numbers of people? And can we afford to wait, complacently or helplessly, for some miracle to happen while our doom marches forward towards us relentlessly, irresistibly! I do not think so. It is not merely a collective but also an *individual* issue and we as teachers should be preoccupied in a special degree with this individual issue. Each one of us has to decide this matter of war or peace, of national egotism or world-mindedness, of destructive mania or creative service for himself or herself—and to do so not in any near or distant future but here and now. We are all caught in a vicious circle and *logically* a vicious circle can never be broken. But life is more powerful than logic and ethical and moral fervour can triumph over obstacles which may intellectually appear insuperable. So we have to try and break this vicious circle in our own individual lives—without making conditions with life, without bothering too much about what others are going to do, without expecting or insisting upon reciprocity, as Gandhiji always did. There is neither grace nor effectiveness in that petty, commercial-minded, haggling approach which says, "If

you promise not to hate me, I shall not hate you; if you can guarantee not to over-run my country, I shall give you a similar guarantee; if you reduce your armaments by one-third or one-tenth, I shall do likewise." This has been tried over and over again, and the nations of the world are whirling angrily and desperately in this vicious circle of bargaining. The same mentality has obviously developed in individual citizens. When I ask for the adoption of this entirely different approach, I am not being 'impossible' or idealistic or visionary. The 'expedient', the 'businesslike', the 'practical' approach has been tried for centuries and has been found wanting every time. Why not give a trial to an act of faith, of moral courage, of a revolution in personal life which is concerned more with being right than with being 'sensible', with reforming oneself than with changing others? In the words of a young Urdu poet:

"Abhi 'ishq nay har mani nahin
Abhi 'ishq ko azmana na chhor!"

(Love has not yet admitted defeat,
Why not, then, give it a trial?)

Every great moral, ethical and religious revolution has come about in the world through the moral courage, idealism and faith of great teachers and prophets who set before the world some *impossible* example, i.e. an example which the worldly minded thought was impossible. They conquered fear and hate through love and offered peace where ordinary 'common sense' would have counselled war. Buddha and Confucius, Christ and Mohammad, and Gandhi in our own day, did not stipulate a change in others—they were different in themselves or they deliberately changed themselves and offered their own supreme example as a beacon light to a restless and misguided world. Perhaps many people would find it difficult to visualize the state of the world in the days of the old prophets nor can they understand their state of mind. But Mahatma Gandhi lived in the full blaze of 20th century publicity and he

achieved his political and (later moral) miracle not by any extraordinary or supernatural means but by the compelling power of his own humanism and universal love. He claimed—*and proved the claim*—that he loved the British while he was fighting against them, that he was a selfless servant of the Hindu society while he was trying to break down some of its most strongly entrenched citadels of orthodoxy and that he was a well-wisher of the Muslims when a large majority of them regarded him as their enemy. Difficult though it sounds, this is the attitude of mind and feeling that all of us have to develop in the degree that we can—breaking through the chains and shackles in which selfishness and fanaticism and political propaganda have bound us—before we can expect any change for the better in the world. Every such changed person becomes a luminous point in an ocean of darkness and, apart from the fact that he thereby fulfils his own moral duty, he may be able to bring about some change in others. As more and more people step out of the vicious circle, it will become progressively weaker, and these liberated persons, belonging to many races and countries and creeds, will be able to speak to one another across the great divides of space and time. Romain Rolland called one of his books—a powerful plea for peace in a world at war—"I Will Not Rest". Persons like us, who profess to believe in Peace and to be poignantly conscious of all that war implies, have no right to rest till we have changed our inner nature and conquered not merely the urge for physical combat and violent warfare—that is what the 'pacifists' aim at and try to do in the face of calumny and persecution—but also the impulse of exploitation, the exclusiveness and the group prejudices which are at the bottom of the almost cosmic upheavals of modern wars. Unless there is peace in the human heart, peace between man and man, peace between our educated intincts and our ideals, there can be no abiding peace in the world.

IV

What can Education do to educate men and women for

Peace? Perhaps not much so far as the adults are concerned, because their minds have been so conditioned by their experiences and the stresses of their environment that a majority of them are not capable of transforming their inner selves. Individuals and possibly even small groups might be able to do so but not whole peoples. All that one can hope in their case is that the bitter and agonizing experiences of the last war, the threat of the unimaginable that lies in the womb of the next, and effective propaganda for Peace may lead them to see the folly and criminality of another war in their lifetime and they *might* throw their weight on the side of peace and make it impossible for their political leaders and demagogues to thrust them into the furnace of war again. *If* our generation can thus get a few years' breathing time, it will be a great gain, for men and women of good-will all over the world could utilize this precious respite to use all the resources of education and of the modern media of mass communication to save the younger generation from the psychological plague that afflicts their elders. That education *can* do a great deal—not very quickly but slowly and steadily—we need not doubt. So far, consciously as well as unconsciously, nations have weighted the scales too heavily in favour of war. They have held up 'nationalism' and narrow 'patriotism' as the highest political virtues and taught young men that it is not only permissible but an act of virtue to kill people of other countries in the name of nationalism and patriotism; they have inculcated, through precept and practice, different codes of ethics and morality in dealing with their 'own' people and 'foreigners'. Even today there are people to whom the touch of a Harijan is pollution and people who regard South African Indians as infra-human and persons for whom ordinary laws of civilized behaviour do not apply when dealing with Negroes! We have glorified wars and warriors and exploiters of other peoples in our history text books; we have set up Race and Creed and Colour as deities that claim our undivided loyalty, and we have failed to inculcate the simple truth that loyalty to mankind is higher and superior to all other loyalties. Is it any wonder, then, that the youths

grow up to regard murder as laudable provided it is on a large scale and is directed towards people living on a different latitude, to feel enthusiastic and patriotic if their nation successfully exploits other nations economically and politically, to believe their own race or religion or complexion as superior to all others and, what is worse, to be prepared to fight like beasts for any one of these unholy objectives?

And yet it need not be so. The child is *not* by nature a fanatic about race or creed or colour or country. If anything he is a humanist, an internationalist, a person with an intuitively warm response towards all living beings. In fact, as all observers have noticed, he does not distinguish sharply between human beings and his animal pets and is just as friendly with them; he even invests his lifeless dolls and other toys with a life history and personality and shares their joys and sorrows and draws them into active participation in his own life! But by the time this loving and lovable child grows to adolescence—whether he has been through school or not—he imbibes from his environment, social or scholastic or both, all the conscious and unconscious tensions and prejudices and phobias which flourish there. He succumbs to their irresistible, though often unfelt, pressure and becomes a part of the half-witted throng which is willing to throw away its precious human heritage for the sake of some warped fragment. He becomes a narrow-minded Chinese or Russian or Indian or Britisher or American; he becomes a narrow-hearted Christian or Jew or Hindu or Muslim; he becomes stupidly attached to, or stupidly resentful of, the pigment of his skin. Thus the shades of this ugly and demented prison-house begin to close around him and by the time he becomes a 'normal' adult, he is—in a large majority of cases—anything but a normal human being, conscious of his great past and his great future and appreciative of all the numerous strands woven into his personality and culture. Must our schools and colleges watch helplessly and hopelessly this process of the perversion of human nature? Can they do nothing to arrest it and give—at least to every *educated* person—a more balanced and gracious and humane view of his function and destiny?

They *can* do a great deal. They have the human individual at their disposal at a stage in life when he is not only most impressionable but is by nature responsible to the appeal of higher motives and ideals. He has still the freshness of the morning dew on his mind and the affectations, the cynicism and the disillusionment of adult life are yet far off. The teachers and professors can exercise a great formative influence on their students' personality for they respond spontaneously to their ideas, ideals and suggestions. True, not every teacher has the gift to put himself in sympathetic *rapport* with them; not every teacher has the necessary vision and outlook to direct their growth on right lines. But my contention is that every teacher should orient himself in this direction and equip himself for this purpose to the best of his ability. If he lacks either the desire or the capacity to play his part in this humanizing of the child, he should quit this field and seek some other field for his labours. Before he can make his children into decent human beings, he will have to release himself from the vicious circle of fear and hatred, of which I have already spoken, and I can visualize no greater or more important or more urgent task for the educationists than the proper selection and education of our teachers for this task. And, then, our schools and colleges have at their disposal all the resources that are implicit in an intelligently planned curriculum, in carefully selected books, and in the use of suitable methods of teaching and discipline. In fact, every single aspect of the life of the school community can contribute, in its own special way, to educating the children for peace and into all those qualities which the conquest and maintenance of peace demand.

The schools, no doubt, reflect the social environment of which they are a part but they are also selective agencies, picking out the best elements and influences from this environment and crystallizing them into educative forces. So they must organize school life and school work in the light of the better individual and the better Social Order that they aspire to create—an individual who will value Peace as an ideal that cannot be compromised and a Social Order that will stress

the values of Peace even as it stresses today the mentality of war. But this can only be done if such a spirit pervades and permeates every single aspect of school work and is not relegated to any particular subject or functions or periods. If you have, for instance, certain special days in a school—the United Nations Day or World Peace Day—on which teachers lecture about Peace and children study its problems or arrange special functions, while throughout the year the trend of school teaching and activities is different, you cannot give their minds a new orientation and may at best be training them in the hypocrisy of rendering lip service to peace. So the school teacher has to analyse and understand the impact of all that he teaches, and all that the child learns and does, on his mind and emotions and outlook. He has to see to it that, through social contacts and academic work, he is building up attitudes of kindliness, tolerance, co-operation, reverence for life and judging things and actions not with reference exclusively to his own interest and advantage but to the good of all concerned. Let me illustrate this view of school work with a few examples.

History, Geography and Civics—which have been given the composite name of Social Studies in modern educational curricula—form the social core of the curriculum and are concerned with the study of man in his inter-relationships with his fellow-men. Through their proper organization, it is possible to give a bias to the children's mind in the direction of Peace and away from war and conflicts. How do we construct our history curricula today? What do we emphasize as the most important facts of history?—wars, conquests, the dynastic squabbles of kings, the pageantry of courts, the conflicts of groups and vested interests! Which are the historical characters that we magnify in our books? Alexander and Napoleon and Chengiz Khan and Hitler and many others who founded great empires and overran many countries and peoples! What is the idea that is gradually and steadily built up in the mind of the child through learning such history? He does not regard history as the fascinating story of man's emergence from the helplessness and the limitations of a

primitive savagery to the power and knowledge and artistry and ethical consciousness that characterize the civilized man at his best. He knows about the 'heroes of war' but little about the 'heroes of peace'—men who worked hard and risked great dangers to make life more safe and pleasant and meaningful for their fellowmen: prophets and teachers, scientists and investigators, artists and men of letters, builders, craftsmen, peasants, labourers.... The real history of man consists in *their* achievements—in the literature and arts that *they* have produced, in the buildings that *they* have constructed, in the beautiful fabrics and the articles that *they* have manufactured and, above all, in the ideas that *they* have developed and through which *they* have won their freedom from nature's bondage and often from their own fellowmen. If the teaching of history can make children realize that all that is significant and worthwhile in life is the result of the co-operative effort of men of all ages belonging to various nations and races and countries and that, in this age in particular, anything that hinders this co-operation is sure to arrest human progress, they will acquire a new outlook on life.

Geography too, can underline this all-important lesson in its own way. It can show how the inter-dependence of mankind is a basic fact, how the distribution of natural resources over the surface of the earth makes it imperative that there should be co-operative planning and sharing amongst the peoples of the world and how any famine or epidemic in any part has its repercussions on other parts. A child who has learnt all this as an integral part of his intellectual education will naturally and spontaneously take a global view of the world and, unless his mind is perverted later by adult influences, he will not regard his own particular part of the globe as the centre with reference to which everything is to be decided. So, like history, geography can also become a humanizing influence, giving a one-world, rather than a parochial or national, outlook.

Likewise, the teaching of civics has to be re-oriented so that it aims not at the training of children only as citizens of their particular countries or nations or States—Indians,

Chinese, Russians, Pakistanis, Americans, etc.—but also as citizens of the world. It must impress in all possible ways the fact that the 'world' is just as emphatically a factor in our everyday life as our country or state or home town and this appeal must be made on all fronts—practical, intellectual and emotional. Through facts and statistics, through song and story, through charts and pictures and diagrams, through festivals and celebrations, and exhibitions, through actual travelling (where possible) they should realize that they are living in a world of which they are truly citizens. They should *feel* this fact emotionally and they should have opportunities of *doing* something to translate their knowledge and their emotions into practice. They should also learn through their study of civics—as I have already pointed out—that where there is a clash of loyalties, the greater loyalty must take precedence over the smaller loyalty. This is not the place to give actual details of the kinds of activities that can be organized to give this world outlook—any intelligent teacher can think out and study numerous ways of making his children aglow with this realization.

Science is yet another subject which can be very helpful in this re-education of the young mind. True, the application of Science to War—and even to Industry—has tended to produce tensions and conflicts which make peace appear almost impossible today. But science itself is essentially and emphatically international—it knows no distinctions of race or creed or country or colour and it *can* be used in the service of man as man—not as the national of a particular State. In the life story of every great scientist, we see the disinterested pursuit of truth, the impulse for unravelling the secrets of Nature—not with the object of personal enrichment or aggrandizement but for adding to man's knowledge and his powers of control. In this glorious pursuit, scientists of all races and ages are fellow-travellers—in the genuine and not the new-fangled sense of that word!—and more closely related to one another than blood relations. The study of Science should, therefore, orient the mind towards the objectives of peace, both by demonstrating how scientific advance—particularly in the field

of communications and production—has knit the world into a unit and by showing how the progress of mankind depends on a grand fellowship of service and co-operation amongst the scientists of all nations. At higher stages of education, students should also learn how the true nature of scientific progress is perverted and betrayed by the war which diverts it into destructive channels and adds to man's misery and suffering. Again, Science is essentially an objective study which deals with verifiable facts and rejects prejudices, superstitions and propaganda as irrelevant. If it can inculcate this general outlook and approach in our students, they will not fall such easy victims to the war hysteria which flourishes on fear, prejudices and ignorance. Approached in this spirit, the teaching of science may become a powerful instrument in the proper education of people's ideas and behaviour towards the issue of war and peace.

Literature offers another powerful agency for influencing the ideas and emotions of the peoples of the world and thus moulding their conduct. In the widest sense of the word, purposeful literature has been used to aid and abet all kinds of purposes; promotion of war as well as peace, of aggressive nationalism as well as broadminded humanism, of the doctrines of race and colour as well as of human fraternity.... If our object is to bias our students towards peace, we must make use of the best that literature has to offer—not only in our own language or languages but in all the languages of the world. And luckily great literature is rich in such material. In fact, one of the marks of great literature is that, though it may speak in a particular language or idiom or may be concerned with artistic or social or cultural or moral issues of a particular people, its *approach* to them is not narrow or parochial or national. It deals with fundamental human issues and problems which, in their essence, are common to all and reveal the intrinsic unity of human life and human objectives. No one can read a great classic, like Tolstoy's 'War and Peace' or Romain Rolland's 'John Christopher' or Upton Sinclair's 'World's End' series—to name only a few modern ones—without a poignant realization of what unites man to

man and how wars, based on exploitation and greed and fear, deepen the tragedy of human life and frustrate its promise. Unesco has formulated a valuable project which aims at the translation of the world's great classics into different languages. If that is done, it will not only be a significant cultural service, but also an educative contribution to peace, provided our schools and colleges have the vision to replace their present 'literary textbooks'—which are often uninspiring, mediocre compilations unrelated to the interests of youth and the deeper issues of the modern age—by really worthwhile and emotionally appealing books.

A few words may be added about other aspects of the work in schools and colleges. It is not only the curriculum that shapes the attitudes and ideas of students but also the methods of teaching and discipline, the system of examinations, the general ordering of social life and activities. If they do not all pull in the same direction, their total impact on their growing personality will be obviously limited. It is, therefore, essential that they should all stress the values of peace—and co-operation which is the method of peace—rather than advocate competition and rivalry as the normal basis of human relationships and activity. Our teaching methods are, as a rule, competitive and individualistic—they do not encourage co-operative work and service, or provide opportunities for it. Our methods of discipline are often based on fear and the thoughtless exercise of authority with the result that we fail to gain children's co-operation in their own training; we do not educate them in self-discipline and thus turn them into easy victims for demagogic propaganda. Without the intelligence to examine, analyse and assess slogans and shibboleths, and without the self-restraint to resist mass pressure and propaganda, educated men and women are swayed by random gusts of public opinion, engineered by vested interests. Thus they fall a prey to any war fever or war hysteria whipped up by such interests. Education must, therefore, put its own house in order, examine its curriculum, methodology and discipline and imbue the teachers—and through them the students—with the ideals, the attitudes and habits of peaceful,

constructive and co-operative work. They should be impatient of all that comes in the way of such work and prepared to resist actively all forces that create such conditions. If education is thus consciously biassed towards peace, good-will and the desire for creative service—some may call it "indoctrination" but I do not mind!—it will make a slow and long-range but steady contribution to the building up of a peace mentality in the world.

V

As I look through what I have written, a doubt, a question mark poses itself before my mind, and perhaps this question may occur to some of my readers also. What is it, after all, that this 'education for peace' sets out to do? *Some change in the contents of the curricula, some change in the methods of teaching and discipline*, some stress on the rather obvious fact that the world has become a single economic and technological unit, some attempt to make people resistant to propaganda; in a word some change in ideas and feelings. What can these possibly well-meaning, but weak, attempts do against the overhanging menace of the Atom Bomb, against the economic clashes that divide groups and the ideological clash between the East and the West that divides the whole world into two uncompromising, irreconcilable and hostile camps? I agree the question is disturbing enough; it has often disturbed me and my faith as an educationist. But I must frankly state the justification for the position that I (and many others like me) have taken up in this matter. In the first place, we do *not* make—we have not made—the glib claim that this educational approach by itself will remove the causes, or stop the recurrence, of wars. We definitely hold that politicians, statesmen and economists must devote themselves seriously and sincerely to the eradication of the economic-political causes of war and to the establishment of conditions of social and economic justice in the national as well as the international field. If that is not done, the pull of obstinate economic forces will nullify whatever education might be

hoping to achieve. But we *do* hold that an educational and psychological approach on the lines suggested is just as important as, and perhaps more effective in the long run than, re-ordering of the social conditions under which people live. "Verily God does not alter the state of a nation unless it alters its mental content" and when Unesco speaks of 'building the defences of peace in the minds of men' it is unconsciously paraphrasing a more than 13-centuries-old principle enunciated in the Quran. We must try and change this 'mental content' of the peoples of the world and we can only do so if we utilize intelligently and effectively our total educative resources for the purpose, which include not only schools and colleges but the agencies of the Press, the Platform, the Cinema, the Radio, the Theatre and other media of mass education. They have been often prostituted in the service of war—they must now be pressed into the service of peace. If a gradual movement towards the ideal of social and economic justice softens the natural and understandable bitterness and frustration which afflict the lives of millions and millions of people in all lands and render the educational approach largely ineffective, we may be able to build a new type of human being who—incredible as it may sound today—would not prefer exploitation to co-operation, destruction to creation, war to peace, death to life!

But supposing the socio-economic revolution is beyond our competence—and most of us as teachers have neither the capacity nor the opportunity to bring it about—shall we sit with folded hands awaiting a miracle? And if that miracle is not to be the dubious miracle of the rise of a dictator thrusting a revolution of his own liking down our throats, how is it to be brought about except through changing the ideas and feelings of a few persons to begin with—who may take the lead—and gradually enlarging the circle? Even the most well-meaning leader is bound to fail if he has not a disciplined and intelligent following, imbued with the same ideals as he has, for it is from them that he derives his political strength. So a properly oriented education will attempt to change the psychology of as many persons as

possible and pit the creative force of a new Ideal ag destructive force of the Atom Bomb. This is not just —it is a plain fact that man has *nothing* with whic contend successfully against guns and cannons and and all other means of destruction except the explosi of ideals and ideas! After all, are not even these instruments of destruction the offsprings of ideas? who belittle the power of ideas, of culture, of educa really landing themselves (perhaps unconsciously) ir less cynicism or defeatism. They have no alternative no way out of this *impasse* to suggest. They are ap refuge behind the plausible plea that nothing can be till a revolution has taken place, leaving unanswered t of it. This is only tantamount to saying that the w not change (and wars will go on) till the world has co changed, which is arguing in a vicious circle and shii burden of individual responsibility! No, the path of and honesty is that, while we may do all we can t our material environment, we should also strive to of our ability to revolutionize our ways of thou behaviour and to create an 'active mentality' in fa peace. And we cannot do so unless we change o unless we step out of the vicious circle, unless we are c prepared to practise in our lives—without counting tl the principles that we profess to preach. The gre Mahatma Gandhi and his superiority over all his co raries consisted primarily in the fact that he had fully achieved a revolution in his personal life an and truly accepted, as an everyday working prir conduct, the ideal of Ahimsa, Satya and Love mankind. Every fresh trial and suffering raised h stature and, in the last lap of his life when he was against the moral evil and ugliness that had reared amongst his own people, he attained what I can only as epic height. We can make some little contribution even be a *big* contribution—to the cause that we chei if we can bring about a change in our personal lives, es all narrowness, all parochialism, all our traditional

ment to our separateness as individuals and to absolute sovereignty as nations and cultivating, instead, a passion for social justice and a love for mankind which knows no frontiers of race or class or creed or geography. To some it may come through an intellectual approach which is often long and arduous; to others it may be given in an intuitive flash of faith. But unless it does come, we are not fit to be the bearers of the torch of peace. As Rajaji once remarked in happily chosen words,* "If the knight is not worthy, the quest of the Holy Grail will be fruitless and the Golden Cup will slip out of his hands." We must make ourselves into Knights worthy of the great crusade in favour of peace and sanity. It has been often asserted by great teachers and moralists that it is not enough that our Ends are good; the Means that we adopt for their achievement should also be good and clean, otherwise they will infect and corrupt the Ends. This applies also to the *human* agents striving for their various Ends. Without a radical change in the personal life of individuals—and that means at least one individual for *each* one of us!—it is idle to hope that any great collective change can be brought into being.

So, let us not be too apologetic or hesitant about what we can do. We may not be able to achieve spectacular results within a short space of time but our approach is psychological and fundamentally sound. To the politician or the man of big business, obsessed with large-scale happenings and results, the trees are invisible because of the magnitude of the wood. But for the teacher, the educationist, the man of vision, it is the individual trees that constitute the wood and the individual men and women who make up the great collective. He finds as much pleasure and significance in implanting the seeds of good ideas and good emotions in the nascent mind of the young child and in watching them grow into saplings as the powerful politician does in implanting a Marshall Plan or organizing a Cominform. To the unimaginative eye, this

* I am quoting from memory and cannot guarantee the verbal accuracy of the quotation.

preoccupation with teaching, with culture, with the nice distinctions between ideas, with the emotional reorientation of the individual citizen may appear—in fact, often does appear—trivial. But in the matter of values and ideals and the appraisal of what gives meaning to life, we cannot think in terms of quantity to the neglect of quality and significance, whose quest is our highest aim. And we should not take our cue form, or accept the position of, campfollowers to war mongers and political bunglers. In the past, 'intellectuals' have often been content to dance to their tune and, whenever they have whipped up a war hysteria, they have tamely fallen into line. This has had a disastrous effect on the life of our generation and it is high time that we combined the collective resources of education and healthy propaganda to turn the tide. We must co-ordinate the schools, the colleges, the newspapers and journals, the cinemas, the theatre and the radio into one effective and harmonized educational pattern so that their cumulative influence may be utilized to eradicate the poison which has seeped into our social system and our minds. It is a calumny to assert that human nature is incapable of living peacefully and wars are rooted in its texture. Those who hold and propagate such views are either interested in doing so for their own purposes or they honestly fail to realize that human nature appears to be like this because it has been *conditioned* in this manner. If we can change the technique and ideology of conditioning, we may be able to achieve a more attractive and a truer view of human nature. Psychologically speaking, there is no reason to be pessimistic, to regard wars as inevitable and to decide to do nothing but lazily await the day of doom. It is this very feeling of despair and helplessness and passive acceptance of the inevitability of war which creates a favourable soil for it. It means in effect that, while war mongers are active and busy, the men and women of good will, the peace-loving groups, give up the good fight without striking a blow in defence of their ideals. In such a tug-of-war, where only one party is pulling and the other does not contest because it is convinced of its defeat, the result is obvious. Let us not accept this wrong

and humiliating position. Let us, I repeat, mobilize all our forces in the defence of peace, stretching our hands across to all those who wish to join in the great fellowship of faith in peace. Let us make public opinion so strong and vocal in favour of peace in all countries that no Government, however chauvinistic and aggressive, would dare to break down the defences of peace and precipitate the horrors of war.

This can be done. And what is more important, this must be done. There is no alternative.

XX

THE EVE OF FREEDOM—AND AFTER

AN OPEN LETTER TO NEHRU*

MY DEAR PANDITJI,

It was the memorable night preceding the 15th of August when India was to attain her political freedom. The fateful midnight hour had not yet struck. A middle class family, consisting of about a dozen members, was waiting happily to listen-in to the ceremony in the Constituent Assembly. The members varied in age from five to fifty and included a couple of distinguished writers, an educationist, several girls at College and some elderly women who, all their life, had been mainly preoccupied with domestic problems and the joys and worries which they bring in their train. Public affairs and political events had, no doubt, impinged on the consciousness of these women now and then and had moved them to pity or sympathy or indignation, as they would any decent person, but the impact had never had the poignancy of a personal tragedy. They were feeling thrilled at the prospect of their country's freedom and fondly imagined that it would quickly alter the shape of things and herald a new era of peace and prosperity.

You know the kind of mood that is induced by such occasions and, taking advantage of it, one of the members raised an interesting problem for discussion. It is true, he

* This letter was written in the dark days of late 1947 when India was passing through the bloody aftermath of the partition but it was not then published. It is pervaded by the mood and the idiom of the moment but the problems that it touched are still with us. This is my apology for including it in this publication.

said, that we shall be technically achieving our freedom in about an hour's time. But it is no easy matter to attain, or to retain, freedom in its fullness. We have been under political subjection for so long not because the British had conquered our country but because we had lost the qualities which really make men and women free. Now, these qualities will not suddenly spring up full-fledged tonight, as light springs up at the pressing of an electric button, but will have to be carefully and laboriously fostered. And this has to be done by *each* one of us—each one of the several hundred million persons living in India. Let us try and think out what these qualities are and solemnly resolve, at this historic moment, that we shall try to cultivate them in ourselves and encourage them in our friends and relations so that we may prove worthy of the future that we have been dreaming about.

So the discussion was started and, as there were several children in the group, it was carried on in simple and concrete language—which is good for the grown-ups also, who are often apt to be deceived or confused by their own high sounding words and phrases. The ball was set rolling by a young girl of five who was asked: What do you think we should all do to live nicely and to help our country? With intuitive insight, she came out with the surprising reply:

"Humain chahyay ke ham khud khush rahain aur dusron ko khush rakhen."

(We should try to be happy ourselves and make others happy.)

Doesn't that contain the essence of the wisdom of many philosophers and moralists? (And are we not doing all that we can do to make ourselves and others as miserable as possible?) The others then took up the discussion in the reverse order of age and made their suggestions which were crystallized, after discussion, into the following five qualities which, all agreed, were needed, not in particular persons or groups, but in *all* the citizens of a free India and which *could*

be developed in them to a greater or lesser degree.

1. Moral courage, which would defy fear and resist temptations in the interest of what one considers right and true.
2. Tolerance, which would teach people to live and let live and welcome honest differences—not make them a cause for fratricidal conflict.
3. Efficiency and integrity in work which means putting the best of oneself in whatever task one undertakes to do.
4. Desire for service which implies a greater preoccupation with what one can *put into* life than with what one can *get out* of it.
5. Good temper which makes life bearable, if not pleasant, even in difficulties.

Then the midnight hour struck and the Radio was switched on and they all listened-in to the historic ceremony in the Assembly and thrilled to your deeply moved and moving voice as you took the oath of office: "I, Jawaharlal Nehru..." When that was over, they all went out and unfurled the National Flag and the litle girl recited the hope-filled poem of a young poet, which she had learnt for the occasion, beginning:

"In New India we shall build a new Heaven,"

They went to bed that night full of joy and exaltation and the hope of a new earth, a new Heaven and a new dawn.

* * * *

It was almost exactly three months later; the colours of the landscape had, during this period, ripened into autumn tints. During this short period, tragedy had stepped close on the heels of tragedy. The Punjab had gone up in flames: Delhi had had its gruesome bath of blood; Calcutta had flared up twice but the magic touch of Gandhiji had restored it to a

semblance of sanity; in many other parts of India and Pakistan, life and peace and decency were trembling on the verge of a breakdown. The rosy glow of Freedom's dawn had turned blood-red. Communal rioting and civil war had taken the place of law and order and millions of men, women and children had been brought into contact, *en masse*, for the first time in their life, with organized and armed goonda Raj. The "peace" of many long and weary decades of slavery had been shattered by these horrors, which had come into the open in the wake of freedom but had been born and bred in the ugly and diseased womb of slavery. Many persons, unable to understand this fact, were beginning to wonder whether Freedom had been really worth-while....

The family, to which I have already introduced you, was now greatly enlarged because it included many 'refugee' relations—mostly women who were Muslims and had elected to stay in India—but they had to escape with their bare lives from their own native town which had been, to employ a commonly accepted euphemism, "evacuated". They were all utterly grief stricken; some were bitter and some were just stunned. They had spent all their life in a small town to which they were deeply attached and in which their ancestors had lived for about a thousand years—lived and worked, married and multiplied, joyed and suffered, died and found their eternal rest. In that town their men folk had built their modest homes, their places of worship, their educational and cultural institutions; there they had ploughed their lands and carried on their business, at peace with their neighbours of all communities. Some of them had even carried the true message of Culture and Religion and Poetry and Literature all over India. So, to these 'refugees', their small town had been the centre of their universe, with the world as a rather vague and confusing phenomenon on the periphery. And now, all of a sudden, the bottom had fallen out of their small but secure, limited but firm, life and they found themselves adrift in a hostile and unfamiliar world without any moorings. They had fled in desperation to some of their relations living in a distant city but had to leave behind all

that they had in the way of worldly belongings. They felt bewildered, unable to see 'the shape of things to come' for themselves, unable to understand and assess the forces which had pitched them into the centre of this cruel, unprecedented storm.... It was no use appealing to them on the intellectual level and explaining to them the collective nature of the responsibility for the atrocities that they had seen committed with their own eyes, or about which they had heard (and read in the papers) even more harrowing tales. All that they knew in their simplicity was that it was none of *their* doing; *they* had never inflicted any injury on anyone; *they* were not in any way responsible, directly or indirectly, for the catastrophe that had overtaken them and millions of others like them—a catastrophe in which they were caught hopelessly, helplessly.... And, with a blank future staring them in the face and life pressing in upon them in all its stark cruelty, it was difficult to revive the promising discussion about the values and the ideals of life which had seemed so attractive, so appropriate, a few weeks ago. One knows, of course, that it is even more important to do so now than it was then, but one has to reckon with the obstinate facts of human nature when trying to re-claim it from the bitterness of pessimism.... And that, my dear Panditji, is your problem and the problem of all other men and women of good-will today. What are we going to do about it?

You know more fully than I can possibly describe the extent and the intensity of the suffering which partition and the exchange of populations have brought in their train. But that is not the worst. What is even more ominous than murder and arson and loot and the disruption of families is the reaction of these happenings on those who have survived and on millions of others in different parts of the country. These bitter experiences and their reports—which some papers took delight in playing up—have induced in their hearts *not* feelings of pity and charity and commiseration, which lead to active sympathy and the striving to relieve distress, *not* critical self-examination, which may lead to their mental salvation, but bitterness and fanaticism and the mad craving for revenge.

Since "we" have suffered, let "them" suffer and the more horrid the suffering the better! They do not realize, poor deluded fools, that revenge and hatred are double-edged swords which know not the difference between "us" and "them" and plunge at one stroke into the hearts of both, like the dagger thrust of Dorian Gray. The tragedy is accentuated and the problem of re-education made more difficult by the fact that most of them do not see both sides of the picture. They have deeply dyed communal glasses stuck over their eyes and these are so cunningly contrived that they show only the misdeeds of the 'other' community—which means *every* community except their own! Thus they imagine not only themselves but 'their' entire community to be innocent victims of a diabolical plot, hatched by the 'other' community, to wipe them out. All that they see and hear and (curiously enough) all that they do *not* see and hear help to fan the flames still further, turning even normally decent and kind-hearted persons into fanatics or, at least, into passively acquiescent spectators of these unspeakable horrors—when they are perpetrated against 'others'! This alarms me even more than the cold-blooded acts of inhumanity committed by goondas and hooligans. They have been able to get away with their misdeeds because the conscience of the communities *as a whole* did not revolt actively against them. It had become atrophied as a result of the poisonous propaganda to which it had been subjected. Government can suppress a small minority of anti-social elements by force and it should do so, if law and order and culture and decency are not to go under. But one cannot bring the sanctions of force against whole sections of the people if they lose their mental balance temporarily: the approach in their case must necessarily be educational and psychological, based on infinite patience and understanding.

This danger is by no means confined to the adults but is slowly and steadily seeping like a poison into the minds of the children also! Children take their cue, after all, from their parents, their relatives, their friends and school-fellows and, in fact, from the total set-up of the environment in which

they live. If this environment is permeated by infected ideas and sentiments, what immunity can the poor children enjoy against this psychological epidemic? Do you know that, in some places, young children had learnt—in all good faith!—to 'play' at communal rioting, forming themselves into opposing groups of Hindus and Muslims? That in some schools children of one community would not like to sit with children of another community? That there were, and are, organizations systematically trying to sow the seeds of communal hatred and exclusivenes in the minds of young students? (Forgive me for the use of this rhetorical interrogative. Of course, you know all this but it is important enough and tragic enough to bear repetition.) Now, *this* is a danger against which all men and women of good will must fight, with all their strength and resources; for, it involves not merely the blighting of our lives—they seem, for the moment, to be blighted anyway—but also our future, that is, the life of the next generation. Not only were lakhs of refugee children, on both sides of the border, infected by the poison of hatred from which their parents and relations were suffering but millions of other children were also being exposed to the same deadly moral risk. Why? Because their elders had stupidly adopted the same attitudes and expressions, the same incapacity to think coolly and critically, the same hysterical tendency to indulge in mock communal heroics! Because they had taken to the easy device of substituting vocal indignation and vituperation for practical sympathy and service! Rather like a man rushing to a microphone to wax eloquent against the horrors of arson instead of trying honestly to put out the fire which he (and others like him) have started!

How can this fire be put out? How can *we* help in putting it out? This has been the constant obsession of many of us who are connected with educational, literary and cultural activities and who have retained sufficient sanity to realize that we are *all* guilty and that it is less important to apportion guilt and assess responsibility than to fight against this menace to culture and humanity. We have watched with admiration, which has deepened into affection, the courageous fight that

you have put up against the forces of reaction and fanaticism and the noble lead that you have given to the country—a lead back to decency, freedom and justice. When the overwhelming impact of the dark and sinister forces around had driven us to despair, almost defeating our faith in humanity, many of us were able to struggle back to hope through the reflection that India's political leadership was in *your* hands as her moral leadership was in the hands of Mahatma Gandhi. And not only hope but pride that, in a world blinded by greed and the lust for power, and the country itself in the grip of communal and sectarian madness, you held aloft the banner of sanity and vision.... So we have asked ourselves: What can we do to keep alive the vision of Gandhi and to strengthen the hands of Jawaharlal and those who feel like them at this critical juncture?

We feel, in the first place, that we can do so by holding fast to our faith in those supreme human values which we share with you and not allowing the madness around us to affect our own hearts and minds or our vision and perspective. Perhaps we may claim to have succeeded in this to some extent. The declarations of faith published from time to time on behalf of writers, artists, poets and other workers in the field of culture—in India as well as Pakistan—are a small but welcome sign of hope. Secondly, we should do all we can, through the work we are doing in our limited spheres, to assert the primacy of the values for which you stand. And is that sphere so limited? I wonder. Perhaps, for each one of us *individually* it may be limited but *collectively* we, who are concerned with education and other cultural activities, can exercise a powerful influence in shaping the ideas and feelings of our fellow-citizens, particularly of the younger generation. It is our duty and our privilege to construct "defences of peace" and decency in the hearts and minds of all men and women, all boys and girls. I have no doubt that, if all the powerful resources of education, culture and the modern scientific technique of propaganda could be harnessed to this end, great things could be achieved. But we are not at all sure that this is being done adequately or even that

the need for it is clearly realized by all those who are in a position to give the lead in this matter. May I give a few instances to clarify my meaning? You have often called upon all democratic elements in the country and all men and women of good will to combine and stop the moral and social rot that has set in and to help in the re-education of the people. This pregnant idea has to be followed up in an organized manner. Take the teachers, for example, working in all kinds of institutions from the primary schools to the Universities. They constitute a potentially formidable force for peace because they can, amongst themselves, influence millions of children, adolescents and adults. But has there been any all-out, spectacular, psychologically impressive drive to use them for this purpose, to form them into a solid peace brigade? I know—who does not?—that they are by no means immune from the prejudices that divide the rest of the people. But is there any reason to believe that a fair proportion of them cannot be won over to the cause of decency and humanity if our most influential leaders, educationists and educational authorities throw their full weight into this campaign? I am not aware, however, if there has been anything more dramatic than some, more or less formal, speeches and circulars. Could it not be, for instance, that all the teachers are called upon to take, in an impressive setting, a pledge of loyalty to those ideals and values which are not only necessary to save the country from destruction but are also basic to all sound educational effort? If a ceremonious setting is considered good for our legislators and ministers, why not for our teachers also, who are obviously less sophisticated? Could it not be that honest and energetic administrations, which really meant business, took their courage in both hands and eliminated teachers who betrayed this pledge? But most of those who matter are too preoccupied with their administrative duties, their routine work and their public speeches to attend to the mobilization of this educational force. To you who appreciate deeply the significance of such a move—and to Maulana Azad who possesses greater persuasive eloquence than anyone else that I know of—I venture to suggest, as a practicable project,

the conscious direction of the entire teaching personnel towards this end. Inspire them to labour ceaselessly to build the moral defences of peace in the hearts and minds of the younger generation and to count that as more important than teaching children any subjects or skills or helping them to pass any examinations. Do that and you may be agreeably surprised at the result!

Again, there is the Radio, a triumph of scientific ingenuity, through which the spoken word has increased its reach and power a million fold. What can we not do to transform the attitudes and reactions of people through its proper use and direction? Propaganda? Yes, but is there any reason why propaganda in favour of peace and decency and good will should be more objectionable than that which is going on all over the world in favour of war and racial and national fanaticism? How inadequate is the use that we have made of the Radio as an agency for the education of the people! Now that we have a national Government at the head of affairs, can we not (as an emergency measure) bias our relevant talks, debates, dramas, songs, feature programmes, etc. in the direction of inter-group, inter-provincial and inter-communal peace and understanding? A few talks from one or two Radio stations—good, bad and indifferent—cannot go far; the disease is deep-rooted and requires prolonged and concentrated treatment. I do not know if even you are fully aware of the moving impact of your own speeches on all men and women of good will in the country. Surely, if we exercise our imagination and are inspired by a genuine desire to promote peace, we can think out hundreds of ways of furthering our end. The one really good thing that happened on this front, immediately after the dawn of freedom, was the daily broadcasting of Gandhiji's post-prayer speeches. Coming as they did straight from that great heart—without the artificiality, the stage-consciousness and the 'innocuousness' which characterize most Radio speeches!—they provoke people to think and to look into their hearts and many of them began to wonder whether all that they had been doing and saying was right. I know all did not like them—truth is bitter and

cannot be universally popular!—but it is educative to hear unpalatable truth coming from a person whose *bona fides* are beyond question. Why should not these talks have been translated into *all* provincial languages and broadcast from all Radio Stations? Why should they not be printed and widely circulated all over India, particularly in the refugee camps for Hindus and Sikhs and Muslims? Why should not the school broadcasts be specially utilized for the re-education of the younger generation? I do not mean by that merely 'goody goody' speeches and sermons on communal harmony—though a really *good* talk can be much more effective than most people realize. I call for a reorientation of education broadcasts *as a whole*—pertaining to History, Geography, Science, Literature, Current Affairs—in such a way as to strengthen the sense of human solidarity and kinship and promote the appreciation of the cultural achievements and contributions of the various communities. If the best talent in the country could thus be pressed into the service of children, we could infuse a new spirit in our education and help the teachers to view their work from a new angle.

Then there are many other agencies of 'mass communication' which are constantly moulding people's opinions, ideas and emotions—the cinema, the theatre, newspapers, books, periodicals. How powerful—and insidious—is their influence on our tastes, standards and attitudes! No one can deny the leading part played by the newspapers, for instance, in bringing about not only the political awakening which has given us our freedom but also the blood-stained prelude and aftermath of that freedom. I have often felt exasperated or hung my head in shame as I have seen distilled poison seeping into the national mind during the last few years, before and after partition, through many of the daily papers and periodicals and what has happened in this front across the border is too deep for tears. The Cinema and the Theatre have not sinned so blatantly but their sins of omission have been great. They have failed to present, through the subtle but powerful medium of Art, a progressive, dynamic and humane view of life. Oblivious of their higher mission, they have been content

with providing cheap amusement, often appealing to people at their lowest level. Is it impossible, I ask you, to utilize all these agencies for instilling good taste and right values in the millions of people exposed to their direct and indirect propaganda? What some of the writers' and artists' groups have done in Bombay, Calcutta and other places, in spite of their financial and other limitations, shows how much could be done if there were a determined, nationwide attempt to win over all these cultural agencies and institutions for this purpose and use them in an integrated manner.

This does *not* obviously imply an unwarranted encroachment on the freedom of the Press, etc. The purpose should be to ensure that these different educative media do not pull in opposite directions, undoing the good done by others, adopting standards which would corrupt people's taste, warp their judgment and make them content with the third best or fourth best in Art as well as life. After all, the country does spend crores of rupees on Education and is interested in the achievement of certain desirable results. How can it then watch unmoved the wasteful procedure of different 'cultural' agencies, systematically undoing whatever good education might have achieved? Without in any way assuming a totalitarian role, it is the duty of Government to see that licence, masquerading as freedom, is not allowed to jeopardize the moral and cultural health of our people. And surely it should not be beyond the wit of man to devise an appropriate organization and technique for the purpose.

There are many other things that can be done to counteract the present dangerous tendencies, provided there were persons and groups constantly exercised about the problem and bent on treating it as a matter of life and death—which it happens to be! We could, for instance, form "good-will squads" of students of all communities who would be pledged not only to preach and practise peace in normal times but also to resist *jointly* all anti-social elements (whatever their communal or other labels) whenever there is any group tension or rioting. I have not the least doubt that, properly organized and led, they could exercise an enormous stabilizing influence.

Again, we could collect authentic stories about ε communual good-will and service and sacrifice done by p belonging to all communities during the period of acute and broadcast them—through the Radio, the Press and books—all over India. Would they not touch the hea stir the imagination of the old and young alike and mak realize that there have been amongst us, in all commu men and women who jealously guarded their preciou of humanity and kept their sanity intact? It is ce necessary for us to realize that *all* communities hav guilty, that *all* should hang their heads in shame, th intellectual dishonesty and moral cowardice to notice th in the eyes of others while ignoring it in our own. B equally important for us to know that we did not *all* g that we were not *all* guilty, that we did not *all* forg best that our religions and cultures had taught us. If not believe that, hope would be dead and the future be a dark smudge and we should be compelled to rega Tagore and our Gandhi, our Iqbal and our Azad, our S and our Sapru, our Zakir and our Jawahar not as the specimens of our cultural and moral genius but nature's in a doomed land! *We shall not succumb to that defeatism.*

In making these suggestions I might possibly be myself open to the charge that I have a too naive fa the power of ideas and an inadequate appreciation hard realities of political and economic life. May I say have deliberately confined myself here to one aspect problem only, i.e. the educational and the psychologic not dealt with other aspects? I am well aware that the many social, political and economic measures that wil to be put through before normal conditions can be re Refugees have to be resettled and relieved from their physical distress and misery because otherwise their cannot function normally. The anti-social elements that on communal disorders or ill-will have to be put ruthlessly. Reactionary elements, parading as superp will have to be exposed and their influence counte

Minorities, which, from time to time, are threatened and bullied by some sections, have to be reassured and guaranteed their full status as citizens. The economic hardships that are pressing on all alike will have to be removed because they create a fertile soil for all mischief-mongers and merchants of ill-will. All this—and much more—has to be done before India can attain her full status as a strong, united and progressive nation, at peace with herself and her neighbours. But we cannot wait for all these desirable things to happen. We have to break the vicious circle here and now and the educational approach is obviously indicated as the right approach.

We are not despondent about the future of our country or of the Muslims in India. I believe they can still play an important and honourable part in the service of their motherland if they have the will to do so. I know that the task of reconstruction is difficult and exacting but the best of our people are with you in this uphill fight. In your high and uncompromising idealism, in your rapier-like integrity, in your broad humanism and in your charming sincerity and unconsciousness of self, we see the glimpse of hope and the promise of opportunity. There are many others in the country who will advocate and adopt the path of prudence, of expediency and of self-interest, who will counsel caution about this and that. I suppose they have their place in the economy of national life, even as the brake has its function in an automobile. But yours is the dynamism, the vision, the irresistible urge towards better and higher things, which you share, *not* with the politicians, but with poets, writers, thinkers and men of imagination. We feel sure that you will always guard and cherish them—they are your shining armour and your most precious contribution to Indian as well as world politics.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish," said the seer. If the vision that inspires you and that was Gandhiji's guiding star continues to burn brightly and light the nation's path, we are confident that the present darkness will roll away, giving place to a glorious dawn. *And our people shall not perish*—politically or spiritually.

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